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Roger L'Estrange.

THE WOMAN As GOOD as the MAN: OR, THE Equallity of Both *Sexes*.

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THE

WOMAN

AS GOOD

OR, THE

Equality of Both Sexes.

THE PREFACE,

Containing The Plat-form and Deſigne, of the Diſcourſe.

THere is nothing more nice and delicate, than to Treat on the Subject of *Women*. When a Man ſpeaketh to their advantage, it is preſently imagined a peece of Gallantry, or Love: And it is very probable, that the moſt part Judging of this diſcourſe by the Title, will take it at firſt for an effect of the one or o-

ther; and will be glad to know the truth of the motive and designe thereof. Take it thus:

The most happy thought, that can enter into the minds of those who labour, to acquire a solid Science, after that they have been instructed, according to the Vulgar Method, is to doubt if they have been taught aright, and to desire to discover the truth by themselves.

In the progress of their inquiry, it occurs to them necessarily, to observe that we are filled with prejudices, (that is to say, opinions past upon things without true Examination); And that we must absolutely Renounce them, to attain to clear, and distinct Knowledges.

In the designe of insinuating so important a Maxime, we have believed

lieved it the beſt, to chooſe a determinate, and famous Subject, where every one takes an intereſt; to the end, that having demonſtrated, that a Sentiment as ancient as the World, of as great extent as the Earth, and as Univerſal as Mankind is a prejudice or errour, the Learned might at length, be Convinced of the neceſſity of Judging of things by themſelves after having examined them, and not to referre themſelves to the opinion or credit of other men; if they would avoid being deceived.

Of all prejudices, there is not any to be obſerved, more proper for this deſigne, than that which men commonly conceive of the inequality of the two Sexes.

Indeed, if we conſider them in their preſent condition, we may

obſerve them more different in their civil functions, and thoſe which depend on the mind, than in ſuch as belong to the body. And if we ſearch for the reaſon of this in ordinary diſcourſe, we find, that all the World, thoſe that have Learning, and thoſe that have none, and even *Women* themſelves agree, to ſay, that they have no ſhare in Sciences nor Employments, becauſe that they are not capable thereof; that they have not the parts of men, and that they ought in all things to be inferiour to them as they are.

After having tryed this opinion, according to the Rule of Verity, which is to admit of nothing for truth, but what is ſupported by clear, and diſtinct Notions; On the one hand it hath appeared falſe, and grounded on a prejudice, and Popular tradition; and on the other

ther we have found that both Sexes are equal; that is to say, that *Women* are as noble, as perfect, and as capable as men. This cannot be eſtabliſhed, but by refuting two ſorts of adverſaries; the vulgar, and almoſt all the learned.

The former having no other ground for what they believe, but Cuſtome; and ſome ſlight appearences: the beſt way to confute them, ſeems to be, to let them ſee how that *Women* have been Subjected, and excluded from Sciences, and Employments; and having led them through the Principal conditions, and occurrences of life, give them occaſion to acknowledge, that *Women* have advantages which renders them equal to men; and this is the deſigne of the firſt part of this Treatiſe.

The second is employed to shew, that all the arguments of the learned are vain. And having established the Sentiment of equality, by positive reasons, *Women* are Justified from the defects of which they are ordinarily accused, by making appear that they are either imaginary, or of little importance; that they proceed only from the education which is given them, and that they mark in them considerable advantages.

This Subject might be handled two wayes, either in a flourishing, brisk, and complementive Stile, or otherwayes after the manner of Philosophers by Principles, to the end of being instructed therein to the bottom.

Such as have the true idea of eloquence, know well that these two stiles are almost inconsistent to-

together, and that one cannot enlighten the mind, and tickle it by the ſame Methode. It is not but that the flouriſh may be joyned with reaſon; but that ſuch a mixture often hinders the end which ought to be propoſed in diſcourſe, which is to convince, and perſwade, that which is pleaſing, muſing the mind, and not ſuffering it to reſt on what is ſolid.

And as men have peculiar regards for *Women*, if in a treatiſe made on their Subject, we mingle any thing that is gallant and courtly, thoſe that read it, purſue their thoughts too far, and loſe ſight of that which ought chiefly to affect them.

Wherefore there being nothing in the World that concerns *Women* more than this deſigne, where we are obliged to ſpeak in their favour, matters of the greateſt

force,

force, and verity, as far as the capriciousness of the World can suffer it; we thought that it behooved us to speak seriously, and give notice thereof, lest that the conceit, that it might be a peece of airy Gallantry, should make it slightly perused, or rejected by scrupulous persons.

We are not ignorant, that this discourse will render a great many male contented, and that they whose Intereſts and Maximes are contrary to what is proposed here, will not fail to cry out against it. To give means to answer to their complaints, we advertise persons of Spirit, and particularly the *Women* who are not the Spaniels of those that take authority over them, that if they give themselves the trouble to read this Treatise, with the attention at least that the variety of matters therein contained does re-

require, they will obſerve that the Eſſential Character of truth, is clearneſs, and evidence, Which may ſerve them to know whether the objections that may be adduced againſt them be conſiderable or not.

And they may remark, that the moſt ſpecious ſhall be made to them by people whoſe profeſſion ſeems at this day to engage them to renounce experience, common ſenſe, and themſelves, that they may blindly embrace all that agrees with their prejudices, and intereſts, and oppugne all kinds of Truths that ſeem to oppoſe them.

And we pray conſider, that the bad effects, which a panick fear may make them apprehend from this enterpriſe, may never perhaps happen in one ſingle *Woman*, and that they are counterpoiſed with

a great advantage, which may redound there-from; there being perhaps no way more natural, or ſure, to draw the greateſt part of *Women* from idleneſs, to which they are reduced, and the inconveniences that attend it, than to perſwade them to ſtudy, which is almoſt the ſole thing in which Ladies at preſent can imploy themſelves, by making them know that they are as proper thereto as men.

And as there are none but unreaſonable men, who abuſe the advantages that cuſtome hath given them, to the prejudice of *Women*; neither can there be likewiſe any, but indiſcreet *Women*, that ſhould make uſe of this peece, to make them riſe againſt men, who would treat them as their companions, and equals. In fine, if any one be Choaked with this diſcourſe,

courſe, for what reaſon ſoever it be, let him quarrel with Truth, and not the Author: and to free himſelf from peeviſhneſs, let him ſay to himſelf, that it is but an Eſſay of wit: it is certain, that this jurk of imagination or a like, hindering truth from gaining upon us, renders it much leſs uneaſie to thoſe who have pain to ſuffer it.

The

THE TRANSLATOR TO THE Unprejudiced Reader.

I *Well fore-see, that my pains, in making this ingenious* French Author *speak* English, *will, according to the bias of prejudiced, and interested humours, undergoe various Censures; a great many men, especially those who defie the* French, *with their Shop-tooles, will be at it Tooth and Nail, and cry out, that so many out-landish Trinckioms having already crept into use amongst the* Women; *he that would endeavour to introduce more, is no friend to the liberty of the Subject. But such men do but*

but hunt their own shadow; my intent by this Translation being quite contrary.

When I Considered, that of all Nations, The English did most candidly assert, and sutably entertain the worth of the lovely Sex; and by civility, and good nature, as well as prudence, and justice, freely grant an equality to Women, in all things wherein established, and unalterable customes might not be violated; which strangers, even the French themselves, the great complimenters of that Sex, do by the force of Philosophy, and with reasons which wrestle against prejudices, but at most discourse of. I thought I could not do less for the Satisfaction of such English Men, who do not understand my Author in his own Language, than to make him intelligible, and so give them opportunity to infer from his opinions; that what in this matter the Virtuosi, and enquirers of that Nation, Squeeze from subtile Speculation, and Logick, is no more than what every English Man Practiseth by common sense, and Natural inclination. And herein I hope not at all to have offended that Sex.

I think I have no great reason to apprehend ill will from the Vertuous Women, *for my endeavours of letting them hear strangers speak in their favours; since they may Lawfully conclude from thence, that if they enjoy more than their Neighbours of what is their acknowledged due, it must be their peculiar advantages beyond others, that makes them more considerable in the eyes of their Judges: there being no Countrey which produceth* Women, *who ought more Justly to boast of the favours, and endowments of nature, in respect of body and mind, than this; or who more fully enjoy, or modestly use the priviledges which upon that account, are reasonably allowed them.*

This I conceive may be sufficient to warrant my undertaking, especially seeing so candid a peece of Philosophy, *may in a great measure vindicate the honour of the Nation, (which much grieves to be imposed upon by the modes, and punctilio's of the* French *so much in fashion) by letting the world see, that the* English, *Nobly complying with that Justice which is therein so strongly pleaded for; do in matters of importance give*

an

an Example so truly Imitable, that the more ingenious must impute it to Salick Lawes, long Custome, masculine, and harsh constitutions, that they are not Universally proposed as patterns.

It is not my province to attempt the answering of objections, which may be made against this kind of Doctrine; *both since my* Author, *whose task it was, hath fully done it; and that there is no great danger of inconveniencies, here to publish that which is already believed and put in practice. And therefore, if any corrupt minded sales-man, who may pretend to know* Women *better than either the* Author *or my self, because he hath seen more in their Bodices, shall unlace and let flie a dotument, and tell me that in this medling generation I have been a little too pragmatical to follow the steps of a stranger, and tread upon snailes when they show their hornes; I am so innocent as not to reply, but leave him in his chafe, to be convinced by reason, and a good wife: and speak a word to the impartial reader by way of advertisement concerning the Treatise.*

The

The Author *himself gives his Reason, why he hath handled this Subject in so serious a manner, and in so short, and* Doctrinal *a stile: So that I need say no more, but as a faithfull Translator, I have stuck to his words, and sense. I resolved indeed to have accommodated this Treatise as much as possibly I could to the manners, and present customes of this nation; but finding therein, somethings whereon the* Author *does insist as material to the establishing of his opinion, which are not well known in this Kingdome, there being no order of People, nor publick houses here, which in every thing runs Parallel with NUNS, ABBESSE, and MONSASTERIES, but especially with those whom he mentions: I thought it convenient to translate his words Literally, and for the understanding of one passage, which may seem difficult, advertise the Reader, that there is an order of* Nuns *at Paris, who, because they make it their business to relieve, and supply prisoners, and other indigent persons, have the name of* Charity; *and that in the great Hospital the* L'Hostel dieu *there, which is indeed a great Theatre of Humane infirmities; all the*

the sick, are attended by Religious Women. *If the Reader be herewith satisfied I have my designe; and if not, I shall not, I hope, lose the name of a friend, which is,*

A. L.

Errata.

ERRATA.

PAge 43 line 20 read *on Aſpects* for *or Aſpects*
p. 121 l. 1. r. *Offices* f. *Officers.*

THE *WOMAN as Good as the MAN,* OR, THE Equality of the two Sexes.

The First Part.

Wherein is ſhewn, That the Vulgar Opinion is Prejudicated; and that, comparing (impartiality) that which may be remarked in the Conduct of Men, and Women, we are obliged to acknowledge an intire Equality between both Sexes.

MEN perſwade themſelves of very many things, for which they can give no Reaſon; becauſe their Aſſurance is founded onely upon ſlight Appearances, by which they ſuffer themſelves to be hurried: and would have as ſtrongly believed the

contrary, if the Impreſſions of Senſe or Cuſtom had thereto determined them after the ſame manner.

Setting aſide a ſmall number of Learned, all the world hold, as a thing unqueſtionable, That the Sun moves about the Earth: Though that which appears in the Revolution of Dayes, and Years, equally inclineth thoſe (who attentively conſider) to think, That it is the Earth that takes its courſe round the Sun. Men Imagine, that in Beaſts, there is a certain Knowledge that guides them; by the ſame reaſon that wild Savages fancy, ſome little Spirits to be within Clocks, and other Engines which are ſhown them; where of they underſtand not the Fabrick, or Movements.

Had we been brought up in the midſt of the Seas, without having ever come Aſhore, we ſhould not have failed, to have believed (as Children do when they put off in Boats), that in our Floating-houſes, the Land went from us. Every one eſteems his own Countrey the beſt, becauſe there he is moſt accuſtomed; and that the Religion, wherein he hath been Nurſed, is the

True,

True, which he ought to follow; although he hath never perhaps dream'd of examining, or comparing the ſame with others. VVe find our ſelves alwayes more inclined for our Countreymen, than for Strangers, even in matters where Right is on their ſide. VVe are more pleaſed to Converſe with thoſe of our own Profeſſion, than others; though neither their VVit, nor Vertue, be ſo great. And the Diſparity of Eſtates and Conditions, make many judge, that Men amongſt themſelves are altogether unequal.

If we enquire into the ground of all theſe diverſe Opinions, we ſhall find them bottom'd on Intereſt, or Cuſtom; and that it is incomparably more difficult, to draw Men from ſuch Sentiments, wherein they are engaged by Prejudice, than from the Opinions which they have embraced upon the Motive of the ſtrongeſt, and moſt convincing Arguments.

Amongſt theſe odd Opinions, we may reckon the common Judgment which Men make of the Difference of the two Sexes, and of all that depends thereon; there is not any miſtake more

Antient, or Universal. For, both the Knowing and Ignorant, are so prepossessed with the Opoinion, That Women are inferiour to Men in Capacity and Worth, and that they ought to be placed in that dependance wherein we see them; that the contrary Sentence will not miss to be eyed, as a Paradox, and piece of Singularity.

However, for the Establishing of it, it would not at all be necessary, to use any positive Reason; if Men were more just, and less interested in their Judgements, it might suffice to advertise them, That hitherto the difference of the Sexes (to the disadvantage of the Female), hath been but very lightly discoursed off; and that to judge soundly, whether our Sex have obtained any Natural Pre-eminence beyond theirs: we ought to think thereon seriously, and without Partiality, rejecting all which hath been hitherto believed upon the simple Report of other Men, without Tryal, or Examination.

It is certain, that if a Man would set himself in this State of Indifferency, and Neutrality, he must acknowledge (on

(on the one hand) that it is Weakneſs and Precipitancy that make us reckon Women leſs Noble and Excellent, than our ſelves: and that certain Natural Indiſpoſitions render them obnoxious to the Failings, and Imperfections that are attributed to them; and thereby contemptible to many. And, on the other hand, he muſt ſee, That theſe very Colours which cheat People concerning their own Subjects, when they ſlightly paſs them over, would ſerve to undeceive them, if they ſounded them a little deeper. In ſhort, if that Man were a Philoſopher, he would find that there are Natural Reaſons, which invincibly prove, that both Sexes are a like, both as to Body, and Soul.

But as there are not many Perſons, in a condition of themſelves, to put in Practice this Advice; ſo it muſt remain uſeleſs, without ſome pains be taken to labour with Men, and to put them in the way of making uſe of it. And ſeeing the Opinion of thoſe who have leſs ſtudied is the moſt general, with it we ſhall begin our Enquiry.

Let every Man (in particular) be asked his Thoughts of Women (in general) and that he would surely confess his Mind; he will tell you without doubt, That they were not made but for Man; That they are fit for nothing, but to Nurse, and Breed little Children in their Low Age; and to mind the House. It may be the more Ingenious will add, That there are many Women that have indeed Parts, and Conduct; but that even they who seem to have most, when they are nearly examined, discover still some-what that speaks their Sex: That they have neither Solidity, nor Constancy; nor that depth of Judgement which they think to find in themselves: And that it hath been an Effect of Divine Providence, and Wisdom of Men, to have barred them from Sciences, Government, and Offices: That it would be a pleasant thing indeed, to see a Lady in the Chair (in quality of a Professor) teaching *Rhethorick*, or *Medicine*; marching along the Streets, followed by Officers, and Sergeants; putting in Execution Laws: Playing the part of a Counsellour; pleading before Judges: Seated on a Bench

Bench, to Administer Justice in Supream Courts: Leading of an Army; giving Battel; and Speaking before States, and Princes, as the Head of an Embassy.

I do confess, such Practices would surprize us; but for no other reason, but that of Novelty. For, if in modelling of States, and establishing the different Offices that compose them, Women had been like-wise called to Functions; we should have been as much accustomed to have seen them in Dignity, as they are to see us. And should have found it no more strange to have seen a Lady on a Throne, than a Woman in a Shop.

If these Blades be pressed a little further, we shall find their mightiest Arguments reduced to this, That, as to Women, matters have alwayes past as now they go; which is a mark, that they are really such, as they are esteemed: And that, if they had been capable of Sciencies, and Offices, Men would not have denyed them their shares.

Theſe kind of Reaſonings proceed from the Conceit that we have of the Equity of our Sex; and a falſe Notion which Men forge to themſelves of Cuſtom: It is enough with them to find that a thing is eſtabliſhed, to make them believe it well grounded. And as they judge, that men ought to do nothing without Reaſon; ſo the moſt part of People cannot imagine, but that Reaſon hath been conſulted for the introducing of ſuch Practiſes, as they ſee univerſally received; and fancy to themſelves, that Prudence, and right Reaſon, have eſtabliſhed the Cuſtomes, to which they both oblige us to conforme; ſince, without breach of Order, we cannot therein diſpence with our Obedience.

Every one ſees (in his own Countrey) the Women in ſuch Subjection, that, in all things, they depend on Men, without being admitted to Learning; or any of thoſe Conditions, that afford opportunity to become remarkable by the advantage Parts: No Body affirms, that he hath ever ſeen them treated other-wiſe. And all know, That matters go ſo with them every where, that there

there is no place in the World, where they are not used after the same manner, as we find at Home. In some Countries their Usage is worse, where they are regarded as Slaves. In *China* they keep their Feet little from their Child-hood, to hinder them from rambling out of Doors; where they never see any thing but their Husbands, and Children. In *Turkey* the Ladies are strictly enough confined; And in *Italy* they are not much better. Almost all the People of *Asia*, *Affrica*, and *America*, use their Wives, as we do our Serving-Maids. They are no where imployed in any thing, but that which is esteemed low, and base: And because they only discharge the lesser care of Hus-wivery and Nurses, Men commonly perswade themselves, that, for that end alone they are in the World; and that they are uncapable of any thing else: They cannot easily represent to themselves how matters could be other-wayes; it appearing impossible to alter them, what endeavour soever be used.

The wisest Law-givers in founding their Common-Wealths have establish-

ed nothing on this Account, in favour of Women. All their Laws seem only to have been made to confirm Men in the Possession they have got. Most part of Men, who have passed for Learned, have not said any thing to the advantage of Women: And the Conduct of Men, in all Ages, and Places of the World, appears so uniform in this case, that it seems they have conspired; or other-wayes (as many imagine) have been led thereunto by a secret Instinct; that is to say, Letters-Patent from the Author of Nature.

Men are still the more perswaded in this, when they consider in what manner the Women (themselves) support this their Condition. They look upon it as a thing natural to them; whether it be that they reflect not upon what they are; or that being born, and bred in dependence, they make the same Judgment thereon, as Men do. Now, upon all these views, the one, and the other, let themselves believe, both, That their Spirits are as different as their Bodies; and that there ought to be as great distinction betwixt the two Sexes,

Sexes, in all the Functions of Life, as there is in those which are peculiar to either: Whilſt, in the mean-time, that perſwaſion (like the moſt part of thoſe which we draw from Uſe, and Cuſtom,) is nothing but Prejudice, formed in us by the appearances of things, for want of cloſer Examination; and of which we might eaſily undeceive our ſelves, if we would but take the pains to return back to the Fountain-head, and judge in many Occurrencies of that which hath been done in former times, by what is practiſed at this day; and of the Cuſtom of the Antients, by what we ſee in Vogue in our own times: Had Men followed this Rule in many of their Sentiments, they had not ſo eaſily fallen into miſtakes. And as to what concerns the preſent ſtate of Women, they would have acknowledged, that they have not been ſubjected by any other Law, than that of the ſtronger; and that it hath not been for want of Natural Capacity, or Merit, that they have not ſhared with us in that which raiſes our Sex above theirs.

Indeed,

Indeed, when we conſider ſeriouſly the Affairs of this World, both paſt, and preſent, we find that all agree in this, That Reaſon hath alwayes been the weakeſt: And it ſeems, that Hiſtories have only been compoſed, to Demonſtrate that which every one ſees in his own time, That ever ſince there hath been Men in the World, force hath alwayes prevailed. The greateſt Empires of *Aſia*, in their beginnings, have been the work of Uſurpers, and Thieves. And the ſcattered Wracks of the *Grecian*, and *Roman* Monarchies, have not been gathered, but by thoſe who thought themſelves ſtrong enough to reſiſt their Maſters, and domineer over their Equals. This Conduct is no leſs viſible in all other Societies. And if Men behave themſelves ſo towards their Fellows, there is great likely-hood from ſtronger Reaſon, That, in the beginning, they have done ſo, every one towards his Wife. And this is almoſt the manner how it hath happened.

Men obſerving, that they were the ſtronger, and that in relation of Sex, they had ſome advantage of Body, fan-

fancyed that they had the ſame in all; the Conſeqnence was not great for Women in the beginning of the World, Affairs being in a Condition far different from what now they are: when neither Government, Science, Office, nor Religion, were eſtabliſhed, the Notion of Dependence had in it nothing at all of Irkſome. I Imagine that Men lived then like little Children, and all the Advantage that was, was like that of Play. Men and Women (who then were ſimple, and innocent) were equally employed in labouring of the Land, or Hunting, (as the Wild *Indians* do at this day): The Man took his Courſe and the Woman her's; And they that brought Home moſt Profit, were commonly moſt eſteemed.

The Inconveniencies that attend and follow the big-Belly, weakening the Strength of the Female for ſome Intervenal of time, and hindering them to labour as formerly, required (neceſſarily) the Aſſiſtance of their Husbands; and the more ſtill, whil'ſt they were taken up with the care of their young Children. This produced ſome Re-

gards

gards of Esteem, and Preferrence in Families, which then were only composed of Father, Mother, and some little Babes: But when Families began to be enlarged; and that in the same House, lived not only the Father, but the Father's Mother, the Children's Children; with Brothers, and Sisters, Elder and younger: Then did Dependence dilate it self, and become more sensible: Then was to be seen, the Mistris submitting to her Husband, the Son honouring his Father, and he commanding his Children. And as it is most difficult for Brothers, alwayes, perfectly to agree; we may easily conceive, that they lived not long together, before that some Difference hapned amongst them: The Elder, stronger than the rest, would condescend to them in nothing: So, Force obliged the Lesser to bow under the Greater; and the Daughters to follow the Example of their Mother.

It is easie to be imagined, that in such Families, there were then several different Functions; That the Women, being bound to stay at Home to bring

up

up their Children, took the Care within Doors: The Men (more free and ſtrong) charged themſelves with the Affairs abroad; and that after the Death of the Father and Mother, the Firſt-Born took upon him the Government. The Daughters, accuſtomed to the Houſe, had no thoughts of going abroad; but ſome Younger Brothers, diſcontented, and more fierce than they, refuſing to ſubmit to the Yoak, were obliged to withdraw, and ſet up for themſelves: And ſo, ſeveral of the ſame Humour meeting together, made a ſhift to live on their Fortunes, and eaſily contracted Friendſhip: VVho, finding themſelves without Eſtate, ſought out means to purchaſe what they wanted: and ſeeing there was no other way but to take from their Neighbours, they fell upon that which came next to hand: And, to confirm themſelves in the Poſſeſſion of their New Conqueſts, at the ſame time made themſelves Maſters of the owners.

The voluntary Dependence, which was before in Families, ceaſed by this Invaſion; Fathers and Mothers, with their

their Children, being constrained to obey an unjust Usurper: So that, the Condition of VVomen became harder than before. For, as till then, they had never been marryed but to Men of their own House, and Family; they were afterward forced to take Strangers, and unknown Husbands, who only considered them as the loveliest part of their Booty.

It is ordinary with Conquerours, to despise those amongst the Subdued, whom they judge the weakest: And the Women appearing to be such, by reason of their Employments (which required not much Strength), were looked upon as inferiour to Men.

Some there were who contented themselves with this first Usurpation; but others, more ambitious, (encouraged by the success of their Victory) resolved to proceed in their Conquests. The VVomen being more humane, than to serve such unjust Designes, were left at Home; and the Men chosen as the most proper for such Enterprizes, where there is need of Force. In this state of Life matters being no other-wayes esteemed, but as Men thought

thought them useful to the ends which they proposed; and the desire of Dominion being now become the strongest of Passions, which could not be satisfied but by Violence, and Injustice; of which, men were the only Instruments: It is no wonder that they were preferred to Women. Men like-wise, serving to maintain the Conquests which they had made: Their Counsels were only taken for to establish their Tyranny, because none so fit to put them in Execution. And so, the Mildness, and Humanity of Women, was the sole cause which excluded them from having any share in the Administration of Publick Government.

The Example of Princes was quickly imitated by their Subjects, every one would carry it over his Companion; and private men began to rule more absolutely in their Families. So soon as a Lord found himself Master of a People, and considerable Countrey, he shaped it into a Kingdom, made Laws for Government, chose his Officers from amongst the Men; and raised to Places those who had best served

ved him in his Enterprizes. So notable a Preferrence of one Sex above the other, leſſened ſtill more the Eſteem for the VVomen; and their Humour and Courſe of Life, being far from Butchery, and VVarr; Men believed them no other-wayes capable to contribute to the Safety and Preſervation of Kingdomes, but only by helping to people them.

States and Common-VVealths could not be eſtabliſhed, without the placing of ſome Diſtinction amongſt thoſe that did compoſe them: So Marks of Honour were introduced for diſtinguiſhing of Orders, and Signes of Reſpect invented to teſtifie the Difference, which was acknowledged to be amongſt Men. And to the Notion of Power, was added the External Submiſſion, which is commonly rendred to thoſe who have the Authority in their Hands.

It is not at all neceſſary to tell you, how *God* hath been known of Men; but it is certain, that ſince the beginning of the VVorld, he hath been adored by them; though the VVorſhip which Men have rendred to a *Deity*,

was

was never Regular, but since they were assembled in Bodies to make up Publick Societies.

Now, as Men were accustomed to Reverence the Powers, by External Marks of Respect; they thought it like-wise their Duty, to Reverence *God* by some Ceremonies, which might serve to manifest the Sentiments which they entertained of his Greatness. Temples were built, Sacrifices appointed, and Men (who were already the Heads of Government) failed not also, to take to themselves, the care of that which concerned Religion. And Custom having now prepossessed the VVomen with an Opinion that all belonged to Men, they contentented themselves without aspiring to any part of the Publick Miniry. But the *Idea* which Men conceived of a *God-Head*, being extreamly corrupted by the Fables and Fictions of Poets, they forged to themselves Divinities, both Male and Female; and appointed, Shee-*Priests* for the Service of those of their Sex; but still with Subordination to the Conduct, and Pleasure of their *Priests*.

Women

Women have been likewiſe known to have Governed great States; but we muſt not imagine, that it was becauſe they have been called thereto out of a purpoſe of Reſtitution of their right; but becauſe they had the Dexterity ſo to diſpoſe of Affairs, that *Men* could not ſnatch the Authority out of their Hands.

It is true, there are at this day Hereditary States, where the *Females* ſucceed to *Males*, as Queens, or Princeſſes; But we have no Reaſon to believe, but that if *Men* have ſuffered the Scepter to fall into the place of the Diſtaffe, it was only that they might prevent the People from falling together by the Ears; And that, if they have permitted *Female* Regencies, it was in conſideration, that the Mothers (who alwayes extreamly love their Children) would take a more particular Care of their States during their Minority.

So that, now the *Women* being no other-wayes imployed, but in their Huſwivery, and finding therein buſineſs enough; let us not think it ſtrange, that they have not invented

any

any of these Sciences; whereof the greatest part (at first) have been but the work, and task of some idle Loyterers.

The *Ægyptian Priests* (who had not much to do) busied themselves in chatting together, concerning the Effects of Nature, which seemed most to touch them: And after much talking and reasoning, began to make Observations; the noise of which, stirred up the Curiosity of some *Men* to come in search of them: But Sciences being but then in the Cradle, did not allure the *Women* out of Doors. Besides, that the Jealousie which already imbroyled the Husbands would have filled them with Suspition, that their Wives had gone to visit the *Priests* rarather for Love to their Persons, than Learning which they had obtained.

After that several *Men* had received some tincture of this new Learning, they began to assemble themselves in certain Places, to discourse thereof more at leisure; where every one speaking his Thoughts, Knowledge ripened, and Colledges and Accademies were

were appointed, where the *Women* were not admitted; but in the ſame manner were excluded from Learning, as they had been from all the reſt.

Notwithſtanding, the Reſtraint wherein they were kept, hindred not, but that ſome of them procured the Converſation and Writings of the Learned; whereby (in a ſhort time) they equalled the progreſs of the moſt Ingenious: But Cuſtome having already enjoyned an impertinent *Decorum*, that *Men* durſt not come to their Houſes, nor other *Women* viſit them for fear of giving ſome umbrage, they made no Diſciples, nor founded Sects; but all the Light which they had attained, uſeleſly, dyed with themſelves.

If we obſerve how Modes and Faſhions creep into uſe, and how they are dayly imbeliſhed, we may judge, That (in the beginning of the World) People took no great care of their Dreſs: All was then ſimple and plain, nothing minded but neceſſity. *Men* flea'd Beaſts; and faſtening their Skins together, framed to themſelves Habits. But afterwards, Commodiouſ-

neſs

neſs began to be deviſed; and every one accowtering themſelves according to their fancy, the Faſhions that were moſt decent, were preſently followed; and they that were under the ſame Prince, ſtrove to conform themſelves to his Mode.

It happened not ſo with Modes and Faſhions, as with Governments and Sciences; the *Women* here had their Share with *Men*: who perceiving them by their dreſs more lovely, took no care to rob them thereof. And both the one, and the other, finding that ſome ſort of Apparel ſet off more gracefully, and rendred more amiable the Perſon, both ſtrove to find out the Knack: But the Employments of *Men* being greater, and more important, hindered them from the more eager Purſuit.

The *Women* herein ſhewed their Prudence, and Skill; For, obſerving that new Ornaments made them more agreeable, and dear to *Men*, and thereby their Condition more ſupportable; they neglected nothing which they thought might ſerve to render themſelves Charming, and Lovely. To that end,

end, they employed Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones, as ſoon as they grew in Vogue: And ſeeing that *Men* had deprived them of Means, to make themſelves Conſpicuous by their Parts, they applyed themſelves ſolely to find out that which might render them amiable, and pleaſing. In this they have very well ſucceeded: For, their Beauty, and Attire, have advanced them to greater Eſteem in the Eyes of *Men*, than all the Books and Learning of the World could ever have done. This Cuſtom hath been too well Eſtabliſhed, to admit of any future Change; the Practice thereof, hath continued to our times; and it ſeems to be a Tradition too antient to be now contradicted, or oppoſed.

It appears clearly (from this Hiſtorical Conjecture), That, according to the manner of dealing familiar to all *Men*, it is only by Force and Empire that they have reſerved to themſelves theſe Extrinſeral Advantages; from which, the Female Sex is debarred. For, to warrant them to ſay, That it hath been grounded on Reaſon, they

muſt never have communicated them amongſt themſelves, but to thoſe who have been moſt capable; Alwayes made the Choice of ſuch with exact Scrutiny, and Diſcretion: Never have admitted to ſtudy, but ſuch as they knew diſpoſed for Letters: Never raiſed to Charges, but thoſe that were fitteſt for Employment; and excluded all others. And, in ſhort, Never have ſet any *Man*, on any thing, but what was ſuitable to his Inclinations.

We ſee the contrary daily put in Practice; For, there is nothing but Chance, Neceſſity, or Intereſt, which engageth *Men* in the different Conditions and States of Civil Society. The Children learn their Father's Trade, becauſe that it hath alwayes been mentioned to them. One is forced to the Gown, who would have been better pleaſed with the Sword, had it been at his own choice: and the ableſt *Man* in the World ſhall never enter into Employment, if he want Money to buy his Place.

How many are there groveling in the dust, who would have made themselves famous, had they been but in the way? and how many Clowns are there, that might have become great Doctors had they been sent to School? We have but little ground to pretend that the present *Virtuosi* are only such of the times, who have had the best Genius for the things wherein they excell; and that, amongst so many Persons buryed in Ignorance, there are none who, with the same means which they have had, could have rendered themselves more capable.

Why is it then, that we assure our selves, that Women are less fit for such things than our selves? sure it is not Chance, but Unavoidable necessity that hinders them from playing their parts. I urge not, that all Women are capable of all Sciences and Employments; that any one is capable of all: No *Man* pretends to so much; but I only desire, that, considering the Sex in general, we may acknowledge an aptitude in the one as well as the other.

Let us but glance a little upon that, which we see dayly in the play and smaller

ſmaller divertiſements of Children. The Girles ſhow therein a more gentile air, more of Wit, and greater dexterity: And when fear or ſhame does not ſtifle their Humours, their Diſcourſe, is more ingenious, and pleaſant; and their converſation more lively, brisk, and free: They Learn ſooner what they are taught, if they be equally plyed: They are more induſtrious, more painfull, more ſubmiſs, more modeſt, and more reſerved; In a word, we may remarke in them in a more eminent degree, all thoſe excellent qualities, which being found in young Men, make them eſteemed fitter for high matters, than thoſe who are otherwiſe their equalls.

Notwithſtanding that, that which appeares, in the two Sexes, whilſt they are as yet in the cradle, is ſufficient to make us conclude, that the more lovely gives alſo the faireſt hopes; yet men take no notice thereof; Maſters and Teaching are onely for the Men: Particular care is taken to inſtruct them in all which is thought proper, to form and improve the mind; whilſt in the mean time, the Women are let lan-

guiſh in Idleneſs, Softneſs, and Ignorance: Or, otherwiſe grovel in low, and baſe imployments.

But for all this, we need but two eyes to perceive, that the caſe of the two Sexes is juſt like that of two Brothers, in the ſame family; Where the younger, notwithſtanding of the neglect of his breeding, makes often appear, that the elder has no advantage over him, but the ſtart in coming into the World.

For what end ſerves commonly the Education which is given to Men? It is uſeleſs to a great many for the propoſed end: Nor does it hinder, but that many fall into vice, and diſſolution: And that others remain ſtill ignorant, and even many times become greater Fops than they were before. If they had before any thing of breeding, of briskneſs or civility, they loſe it by their ſtudy. All goes againſt them, and they againſt all things; So that one would ſay, that they had ſpent their youth in traveling in Forraign Countreys where they had only frequented the Society of Salvages; ſo much Clowniſhneſs, and rudeneſs of manners they bring

bring home with them. All that they have Learned is like goods of Coutreband, which they either cannot or dare not vend: And if they have a mind to venture into the World again, and therein appear as they ought, they are obliged to go to School to the Ladyes, there to learn garb and complaiſance; and all that out-ſide which now adayes compleats a Gentleman.

If we come nearer, and conſider this: Inſtead of undervaluing the Women, becauſe they have no great Stock of Learning, we ſhould the rather eſteem them happy: Since that if on the one hand they are thereby deſtitute of the means to ſet off the parts, and advantages which are the peculiar on the other hand, they have not the occaſion to ſpoile or loſe them: Who, notwithſtanding that defect, advance in Vertue, VVit, and good Grace as faſt as they grow in Years. So that, ſhould we without prejudice, or a byaſſed Judgement, compare young men when they come new off of the preſs, with the VVomen of their own [illegible] and not know how either the one or

the other had been bred, we could not but believe, their education to have been quite contrary.

The out-ſide alone, the air of the face, the looks, the gate, the countenance, and the geſtures, in VVomen, ſpeak ſomewhat poſed, grave, and diſcreet, which ſufficiently diſtinguiſheth them from men; none can be more reſerved than they, words of double meaning never eſcape their lips, the ſmalleſt equivocation wounds their ears, nor can they endure the ſight of any thing that choaks modeſty.

The Conduct of moſt men is of a quite different ſtamp. Their March is often raſh, and precipitant; their geſtures odd and Antick, their eyes Rambling and un-ſettled: And are never more pleaſed than when they are entertained and fed with things which ought either be kept ſilent or hid.

Let us but converſe a little with VVomen, and that which the world call the Learned, either in company together, or a part by themſelves, and we ſhall ſee the difference that is between the one and other. One would ſay that the men had ſtuffed their heads with

with ſtudy, that they might Clogg, and confound their VVits. Nothing comes clearly from them, and the pain that they put themſelves to, to pump for the words, quite ſpoils the reliſh of that which they might have ſaid to purpoſe; So that unleſs the natural Wit be good, or they in company with men of their one Gang, hardly can they entertain an houres-Diſcourſe.

Women on the contrary, expreſs neatly, and in order, what they conceive: Their words coſt them nothing; they begin, and go on at their pleaſure, and when they have their liberty, their fancy ſupplies them alwayes with inexhautible liberality. They have the gift of propoſing their thoughts, with a ſweetneſs, and complacency that inſinuates as ſtrongly as Reaſon: When men on the other hand, do it in a manner rough and dry.

Let any Queſtions be ſtarted in preſence of Women of clearer Wit, they have preſently the point that is drove at; They conſider it under more appearances: What is ſaid to purpoſe, finds ſooner acceptance in their minds; And

when that we are a little known to them, and that they have no ſuſpition of us, we find their prejudices not ſo ſtrong as thoſe of men; nor they thereby ſo armed againſt the truth propoſed. They are altogether averſe from contradiction, and diſpute, to which the learned are ſo addicted: they nibble not vainly at words, nor make uſe of thoſe Scientifick, and Myſterious terms which are ſo proper to cover Ignorance; but all what they ſay is ſenſe and intelligible.

I have taken delight to entertain my ſelf with Women, of all the different conditions that I could meet-with, both in the Town, and Countrey; to the end, that I might diſcover the beſt, and worſt; and I have found amongſt thoſe of them whom neceſſity, and labour, had not rendred ſtupid, more ſound judgement than in the moſt part of the workes, which paſs with great credit among the vulgarly learned of the age.

In ſpeaking concerning God, it never entered into one of their heads to tell me, that ſhe conceived Him, under the ſhape of a venerable old man:

On

On the contrary, they ſaid, that they would not imagine, (that is) repreſent him to themſelves, under any appearance like to men: That they conceived there was a God, becauſe they could not comprehend that they themſelves, or that all other things which did environ them, could be the work of chance, or of any creature: and that the conduct of their affairs being no effect of their prudence, becauſe that the ſucceſs thereof rarely anſwered the wayes, and methods, which they had taken; it muſt needs be the effect of Divine Providence.

When I asked them, What they thought of their Souls; they never made me anſwer: *That it is* a very ſubtile, and thin flame, or a diſpoſition of the Organs of their Bodyes; nor that it was capable of extenſion, or contraction. On the contrary, they anſwered, that they perceived very well, that it was diſtinct from their bodyes; And that the greateſt certainty that they could ſay thereof, was that they believed it altogether unlike any of thoſe things, which they perceived by Senſe; but that if they had

been Book-learned, they ſhould have known to a Hair what it was.

It never entereth into the Head of a Nurſe, to ſay as Phyſitians do, that their Sick began to be better, becauſe the Concoctive Faculty performs (laudably) its Functions: And when they ſee a great Quantity of Blood ſtream from a Vein, they laugh at thoſe who deny a Communication of the others there-with by Circulation.

When I would know of them, Why it was that they believed, that the Stones expoſed to the *Sun*, and *Southern*-Showers, did ſooner wear, than thoſe that lay to the *North*? There was none ſimple enough to Anſwer me, That it comes to paſs by reaſon that the *Moon* gnawes them with ſharp Teeth, as ſome *Philoſophers* pleaſantly fancy; but that (they being dryed by the Heat of the *Sun*) the following Showers made them the more eaſily moulder.

I have demanded (at leaſt) of twenty for the nonce, If they believed not that *God* (by an Obediential, or Extraordinary Power) could elevate a Stone to the Beatifick Viſion? But could

could never draw from them any other Anſwer, but that they thought, I jeſted with them by ſuch a kind of Queſtion.

The greateſt Fruit that we can expect from Learning, is a juſt Diſcerning, and exactitude in Diſtinguiſhing of that which is true and evident, from what is falſe and obſcure; thereby to avoid falling into Errour, or Miſtake. People are eaſily inclined to believe, that Men (at leaſt ſuch as paſs for Knowing) have in this the better of the Women. Nevertheleſs, if we have but a little of that Diſcerning and Exactitude of which I ſpake, we ſhall find that it is one of the Qualities they want moſt; For, they are not only obſcure, and confuſed in their Diſcourſes, (by which good Quality they often ſway, and attract the Belief of ſimple and credulous Perſons); but they even reject that which is evident, and ſcoff at thoſe who ſpeak in a manner clear and intelligible, as too eaſie and common: They fall firſt upon any Obſcurity propoſed to them, as being the moſt Myſterious of the reſt. To

Convince

Convince them of this, we need do no more but hear them with a little Patience; and afterward, oblige them to explain themſelves.

The Women are of an Humour very far from this. VVe may obſerve, that ſuch as have a little ſeen the World, cannot endure that even their own Children ſhould ſpeak *Latin* in their Preſence; they miſtruſt others that do ſo; and often ſay, That they are afraid leſt ſome Impertinency be hid under ſuch ſtrange Attires.

We never hear them meddle with the ſacred Terms of Arts, as Men call them; Nay, they cannot be made ſo much as get them by Heart, though their Memories be very good, and that they have heard them often repeated. And when we ſpeak to them in obſcure and hard Words, they frankly confeſs, that they want Wit and Underſtanding to reach our Meaning; or other-wiſe, they well perceive, that ſuch as Cant after that manner, want Knowledge and Learning to ſpeak other-wiſe.

In fine, if we conſider the ſeveral wayes and methods, whereby the Men, and the Women, bring forth what they know; we muſt judge, that the one are like to Labourers that work in Quarries, who (with great Pain) win from thence rude and ſhapeleſs Stones; And that the Women (like skillful Architects, and Maſons) poliſh, and fitly place in Work, what they have put into their Hands.

VVe find an infinite number of *Women*, who not only Judge of things with as much Exactneſs, as if they had had the moſt exquiſite Education; without either Prejudices, or confuſed Notions (the ordinary ſtumbling-Block of the Learned); but alſo, ſee many, that (with a Judgement cleer and juſt) can Diſcourſe of the Objects of the moſt Refined Sciences, as if they had alwayes ſtudied them.

They expreſs their Minds with a Grace; and have the Knack by hitting on the beſt Terms in uſe, to ſpeak more with one word than *Men* can do with many. If we Diſcourſe with them

them of Languages in general, they have that pitch of Thoughts which is not to be found but in the ableſt *Grammarians*: And, in ſhort, They are obſerved to draw more from Cuſtom alone, for the embelliſhing of their Language, than the moſt part of *Men* from Study and Practice both together.

Eloquence is a Talent ſo natural, and peculiar to them, that no Body can diſpute it: They perſwade what they pleaſe; and can Indite and Defend without the help of Laws: So that, there are but few Judges, who have not proved them the moſt prevalent Proctors. Can there be any thing more weighty, or Elegant, than the Letters of ſeveral Ladies upon all the Subjects that fall under ordinary Converſation, and principally upon the Paſſions? The Movements of which, make up all the beauty and ſecret of *Rhetorick*. They handle them with ſo delicate a Touch, and expreſs them ſo Naturally, that we are obliged to confeſs, that we feel them to be ſuch as they ſpeak them; and that all the Oratory of the World is not able to

give

give to *Men*, that which coſts nothing to *Women*. The Flights of Eloquence, Poeſie, Harangues, Sermons, and Diſcourſes, ſoar not at all above their reach; And nothing is wanting to their Criticks, but the Rules, and a few Terms of Art.

I am not ignorant, that this Treatiſe it ſelf, will not eſcape their Cenſure; and that there are many who will find fault with it: Some will condemn it, as not at all proportionate to the Grandeur, and Dignity of the Subject: That the Strain of it is not ſo Gallant, the Stile ſo Noble, nor the Expreſſions ſo Lofty and Elevated as was fit: That there are ſeveral Paſſages ſlightly handled, where many Important Remarks might have been imployed: But I hope my Good-will, and the Deſigne which I propoſed, to ſpeak nothing but Truth, and to avoid the forced Expreſſions which ſavour of *Romance*, will plead Excuſe for me at their Hands.

They have (moreover) this Advantage, That the Eloquence of Action is in them much more lively than in *Men*: There, *Men* alone lets us ſee, that

that they intend ſo to ſpeak, as to gain the Point.

Their Air is noble and great, their Port free and Majeſtuous, their Carriage decent, their Geſtures naturall, their Stile engaging, their Words eaſie, and their Voice ſweet and melting. The Beauty and Grace of their Diſcourſe (when it enters once the Mind), opens to them the Door of the Heart. If they reaſon of Good and Evil, on their Countenance appears that Character of Integrity, which renders the Perſwaſion more prevalent: And when they would excite Love for Vertue, their Heart is ſeen on their Lips; and the Image which they give thereof (decked with the Ornaments of Diſcourſe and Graces, which are ſo peculiar to them) appears a hundred times more Lovely.

It is pretty to hear a *Woman*, that ſets herſelf to plead; how clearly ſhe explains, and unties all the Knots and Labyrinths of Affairs; preciſely ſtates her own, and Parties Pretenſions: Diſcovers what hath given ground to the Suit, and the manner how ſhe has managed

managed it; what Engines she hath set a work in all her Proceedings; and how (in all things) she shewes a certain Capacity in Busines, which is wanting to the most part of *Men*.

It is this which makes me think, that if they made it their busines to study Law, they would succeed in it (at least) as well as we; But we see, that Peace and Justice is their study; With Grief they hear of Differences, and with Joy endeavour to take them up friendly: Their Care in that, makes them find out Turns, and singular Expedients, for the Reconciling of Minds; And, upon the Conduct of their own, or their Neighbours Families, they naturally make these Reflections of Equity; upon which, all the knowledge of Law and Justice is founded.

In the Rehearsals of those who are Witty, there is alwayes some pleasingness with order, which is not to be found in ours: They discern what is proper, or impertinent to the Subject; decide the interests; describe the persons, with their true and natural Characters;

racters; unfold the intrigues, and trace the greateſt as well as the leaſt, when they ſet thereon. This is evidently to be ſeen in the Hiſtories, and Romances of ingenious Ladyes who are ſtill alive.

How many are there that learn as much at Sermons, in Diſcourſe, and ſome little books of Piety, as many Doctors with *Thomas Aquinas* in their ſtudyes, or upon their deskes? and ſpeak with that ſolidity, and depth about the higheſt Myſteries of all the Chriſtian Morality; that they might often paſs for great Divines, if they did but wear a hat, or could Lugg into play Latin ſentences.

VVomen ſeem born to practiſe Phyſick, and to reſtore the ſick to health; for the neatneſs and complying humour eaſeth one half of the diſtemper; and they are not only proper to apply remedyes, but likewiſe to invent: They find out an infinite number, which are commonly called Small, becauſe they coſt leſs than thoſe of *Galen* or *Hippocrates*, and are not preſcribed by Receit, but which are by ſo much the more eaſy, and ſecure, as they

they are simple and natural. In fine, they make their observations in their practises, with so much exactness, and discourse thereof with so good reason; That they often render useless all the Places of the Schools.

Amongst the countrey Women, those that labour in the fields, are wonderfully skilfull in the odd, and unconstant Freaks of Seasons; and their Almanacks are a great deal more certain than those, which are printed from the hands of Astrologers. They explain naturally the fertility and barrenness of years, from the Winds, Rains, and what else is produced by the change of VVeather; so that no body can hear them discourse thereof, without pity and compassion of the Learned, who charge all these Effects or Aspects, Conjunctions, Ascendencies of Planets and the like; which makes me think, that if Women had been taught, that, the alterations to which the body of man is subject, might come upon him by reason of his particular constitution, his exercise, the climate wherein he lives, his food, education, and different occurrences of Life; they had never let it enter in their heads

Heads, to have referred these Various Inclinations and Changes to the Influencies of Starrs; Bodies at so many Thousand Miles distant from us.

I confess, there are some Sciences, of which *Women* are not at all heard speak; because they are not the Sciences of ordinary Vent, nor Society. *Alegebra*, *Geometry*, and the *Opticks*, never (or rarely) leave Studies, and Learned *Academies*, to come into the Croud. And, as their greatest use is, to give just Measures to our Thoughts, they ought not to appear in ordinary Converse; but secretly, like hidden Springs that move, and make great Machins Play: my Meaning is, that we should make such Application of them in the Subjects of Converse and Entertainment, as to think and speak truly, and *Geometrically*, without making great shew of our Art.

All these Observations on the Qualities of the Mind, may be easily gathered amongst *Women* of a middle Condition; But if we advance as far as the Court, and be admitted into the Entertainments of Ladies, there is

is quite another thing to be Remarked. It seems that their Genius is Naturally suited to their Quality; their Quaintness, and polite Discerning, speaks a frame of Spirit, delicate, fine, and easie; and some-what Great and Noble, which is their own. We may say, that Objects (like *Men*) approach them with Respect; they alwayes see them in their best Dresse, and speak of them with an Air beyond the Common. In a word, show a *Man* that has a taste, two Letters of Ladies of a different Rank, and he shall easily know which of them is Highest in Quality.

How many Ladies have there been, and how many are there still, who ought to be placed amongst the number of the Learned, if we assigne them not a Higher Sphear? The Age wherein we live hath produced more of these, than all the past. And as they have in all things run parallel with *Men*, upon some Particular Reasons, they ought more to be esteemed than they: For, it behoved them to surmount the Softness wherein their Sex is bred, renounce the Pleasures and Idleness

neſs, to which Cuſtom had condemned them, overcome certain publick Impediments that removed them from ſtudy, and to get above thoſe diſadvantagious Notions, which the Vulgar conceive of the Learned; beſides, thoſe of their own Sex in general: All this they have performed. And whether it be, that theſe Difficulties have rendred their Wit more quick and penetrating, or that theſe Qualities are the peculiar of their Nature, they have (proportionably) made Progreſs and Advancements beyond *Men*.

It may be ſaid nevertheleſs (without diminiſhing the Sentiments which are due to ſuch famous Ladies), that it is occaſion, and External means, which hath advanced them to this State, as well as the more Learned amongſt us; and that there are infinite numbers of *Women*, which could have done no leſs, had their Advantages been Equal.

And, ſeeing it is great Injuſtice to believe, that all *Women* are Indiſcreet, becauſe we know five or ſix to be ſo; we ought alſo to be ſo equitable, as to judge their Sex capable of Sciences,

ces, since we see many that have raised themselves to a perfection therein.

It is commonly believed amongst us, that *Turks*, *Barbarians*, and wild Savages, are not so proper for learning as the people of Europe; though it be certain, that if we found five or six of them here, that had the capacity or title of Doctor (which is not at all impossible) they would correct our opinion; and confess, that these being men like to our selves, they are capable of the same things; and that if they had been taught, they would not have yeilded to us in the least. The Women, with whom we live, deserve surely as much as *Barbarians*, and Savages, to oblige us to entertain thoughts no less reasonable or advantagious for them.

But if the head-strong vulgar (notwithstanding these observations) will still stand upon it, that the VVomen are not so fit for Arts, and Sciences as we are; they ought at least to acknowledge, that they have less need of them. For it is for two ends that we apply our selves to Learning; The one, that we may attain to a true knowledge

of

of the objects of our Sciences; and the other, that by such knowledge, we may rise to virtue: So that in this our short life, Knowledge being but the hand-Maid to Vertue; and the Women in possession of this: we may conclude, that by a particular happiness, they have gained the principal advantages of Sciences, without having ever taken the pains to study them.

What we see daily, is sufficient to convince us, that they are no less Christians than men; They receive the Gospell with Simplicity and Humility; and in following the Rules and Maximes thereof, are exemplary: Their reverence towards Religion, hath alwayes appeared so great, that they are esteemed without contradiction more devout and pious than we: or, though it be true, that their worship sometimes goes too far; yet therein I cannot find them so culpable; since the ignorance wherein they have been bred, is the necessary cause of that excess. If their Zeale be undiscreet, their Perswasion is at least true; And we may affirm, that if they had a clearer sight of Vertue, they would embrace it after another manner;

ner; since they cleave to it so fast, even through obscurity and darkness it self.

It seems, that mercy and compassion which is the Vertue of the Gospel is in love with their Sex The calamity of their Neighbour no sooner touches their mind, but it pierces their heart, and brings teares in their eyes. Is it not their hands that in publick afflictions distribute the largest Charity? And is it not at this day the Ladys that take the particular care of the poor and sick in the parishes, visit them in prisons, and serve them in the Hospitals? Is it not these Religious Nuns, dispersed in every quarter, who have the charge at certain hours of the day, to carry to such their food, and necessary remedies; and have thereby deserved the name of that Charity, which they have so worthily practised.

In fine; If there were no other Women in the world that discharged this Vertue towards their Neighbours but those who attend the sick in that great Hospital, the *L'Hotel-Dieu* of *Paris*; I cannot think that with Justice men could pretend to the advantage above

their Sex therein. These are properly the Virgins, with whom the Galleries of the Illustrious, and Noble Women, ought to be enriched: Of their life it is that we should sing the highest Elogies, and honour their death, with the most excellent Panegyricks: Since here it is that we may see the Christian Religion, that is to say, truly *Heroicke* Vertue, practised up to the rigour, both in it's precepts, and counsels; by young Virgins, who Renouncing the World and themselves, embrace a perpetual Chastity, and Poverty, take their Cross, and that the most heavy Cross of the world, and render themselves for the rest of their dayes, under the Yoak of *Jesus Christ*: VVho Consecrate themselves to an Hospital, where the infirm of all sorts, of all countreys and Religions are indifferently received, there to serve all without distinction, and to change themselves (according to the example of their Lord and Husband) with all the infirmities of mankind: without being discouraged by having their eyes Continually smitten with the most horrid of Spectacles, their eares with the reproaches and cries of the sick, and

their

their ſmelling with all the infectious ſcents of Humane putrifaction: and who, for a marke of that Spirit which does guid them, carry in their armes from bed to bed, and comfort the poor wretches, not in vain words; but by the effectual, and perſonal Example of patience, and invincible Charity.

Is there any thing amongſt Chriſtians to be conceived greater than this? And yet, Other *Women* are no leſs inclined to aſſiſt, and comfort their neighbours; they want nothing but opportunity, when other buſineſs does not divert them there-from. And I think it no leſs unworthy to imagine from thence, (as the vulgar commonly do) that *Women* are naturally ſervants to men; than to pretend that they, who have received talents, and particular endowments from God, are ſervants, and ſlaves to thoſe, for whoſe good they employ them.

The conduct of *Women*, in what kind of life ſoever they embrace, hath alwayes ſomewhat remarkable. It ſeems that ſuch who live ſingle, and yet keep their freedome in the world, remain only there to be a pattern, and give example to others. Chriſtian modeſty

appears in their countenance and attire, and Vertue makes their chiefeſt Ornament. They wholly ſeparate themſelves from worldly Converſation and paſtimes; and their application the works of Piety, and Religion, gives clear proof, that they have only refuſed the cares, and trouble of Marriage, that they might enjoy a greater liberty of mind, and be obliged to nothing elſe but to pleaſe God.

There are as many Monaſteries under the government of *Women* as of Men, and their lives therein no leſs exemplary. There, the recourſe is greater, the diſcipline no leſs Auſtere; and the Abbeſſes of no leſs worth than the Abbots. They ſetle Rules with ſo admirable Wiſdome, and Govern their *Nuns* with ſuch prudence, that ſeldome amongſt them happens any diſorder: and, in ſhort, the fame of Religious houſes, and the great Rents which they poſſeſs, are the fruits of the good order of their Superiours.

Marriage is a ſtate of life, the moſt natural, and ordinary to men; when once they are ingaged therein, it is Death that muſt diſcharge them, and there

there they ſpend theſe periods of age, where reaſon ought to be the chief guid, over the different accidents of Nature and Fortune (to which this Condition of Life is liable) exerciſing them who live therein more than others, & gives them occaſion thereby to give greater tryal of their Parts.

A little Experience is ſufficient to inform us, That the *VVomen* here are more fit and uſeful than we; For, young Maids are capable to order a Houſe, at that Age, when *Men* ſtand ſtill in need of a Maſter. And the moſt proper Expedient to reclaim a young *Man*, and reſtore him to the Right Way, is, to give him a *VVife*; who may reclaim him by her Example, moderate his Extravagancies, and win him from his Debauches.

What Complyance does not Wives uſe, that they may live peaceably with their Husbands? They ſubmit to their Humours, do nothing without their Advice, lay conſtraint upon themſelves in many things for fear to diſpleaſe them, and even deprive themſelves of honeſt and lawful Recreations, to free them from Suſpition.

It is well enough known, which of the two Sexes is the moſt faithful to the other, beares more patiently the Misfortunes that happen in Marriage; and thereby make appear greater Wiſdom, and Diſcretion.

All the Families (for the moſt part) are Ruled by the Wives, to whom their Husbands reſigne the Government: And the Care that therein they take of the Education of their Children, is more conſiderable to Families, and more important to the Common-Wealth, than that which they take of the Eſtate; they bequeath themſelves wholly to their Good, and Wellfare: The Fear which they are in, leſt any hurt ſhould befall them, is often ſo great, that (many times) it robs them of their Reſt: They deprive themſelves often of their moſt neceſſary Enjoyments, to the end that they may want nothing: They cannot ſee them ſuffer in the leaſt, without ſuffering themſelves to the bottom of their Souls. And we may ſay, That it is their greateſt pain, that they cannot eaſe them, by charging themſelves with their Troubles.

Who

Who can be ignorant, how earneſtly they labour to inſtruct them in the ways of Vertue, as much as their tender Age is capable of? They endeavour to make them know and fear *God*, and teach them to Worſhip him in a manner ſuitable, and proportionate, to their Years: They take care to place them in the hands of Maſters, as ſoon as they are fit; and chooſe ſuch (with all imaginable Caution) who may improve them in their Breeding: And, which is moſt to be eſteemed, they alwayes joyne good Example to their Inſtruction.

If we ſhould deſcend into an intire Catalogue, and Retail of all the Occurrencies of Life, and of all the Vertues which *Women* practiſe therein, and thereof examine the moſt Important Circumſtances; we might have Subject enough to enlarge into a moſt ample Panegyrick. We might repreſent how far their Sobriety in Eating, and Drinking, does go; their Patience in Trouble; their Courage, and Fortitude, in ſupporting Affliction: Fatigues, Watchings, and Faſtings; their Moderation in Pleaſures, and

Paſſions; their Inclination to do good; their Prudence in Affairs; their Integrity in all their Actions. And, in a word, we might make appear, that there is no kind of Vertue, which is not common to them with us; But, on the other hand, that there are a great many conſiderable Faults, which are peculiar to *Men*.

Theſe are the general and ordinary Obſervations, upon what concernes *Women* in reference to the Qualities of the Mind; the Uſe and Practice of which, is the onely thing that ought to put a Diſtinction amongſt *Men*.

Now, ſince there is not any Rancounter, where *Men* may not diſcover the Inclination, the Genius, the Vice, the Vertue, and the Capacity of Perſons; thoſe (who would undeceive themſelves concerning this Subject of *Women*) have alwayes occaſion to do ſo in Publick, or in Private; at the Court, and at the Convent; in Recreations, and Exerciſes; with the Poor, as well as the Rich; in whatſoever Condition, or Quality they be. And, if we conſider ſincere-

ly,

ly, and without Intereſt, what may be obſerved on their behalf, we ſhall find, that if there be ſome Appearances which ſeem leſs favourable to *Women*, there are alſo more which are moſt advantagious for them; that it is not for want of Merit (but of good Luck, and Strength) that their Condition is not Equal to ours: And, in fine, that the common Opinion is but a popular, and ill-grounded Prejudice.

THE *WOMAN as Good as the MAN*, OR, THE Equality of the two Sexes.

The Second Part

Wherein is made appear, That the Reasons which may be adduced against the Opinion of The Equality of the two Sexes, *from Poets, Oratours, Historians, Lawyers, and Philosophers; are all Idle, and Fruitless.*

THat which confirms the Vulgar in the thought which they have of *Women*, is, That they find it propt, and supported, by the Sentiment of the Learned: So that, the Publick Voice

of

of thoſe who Rule by Credit, agreeing in certain general Appearances, to the Diſadvantage of *VVomen*; it is not to be wondered at, to ſee them ſo ill entertained in the Minds of the Ignorant, and Simple. And, it happens in this as in a great many other things, that *Men* confirm themſelves in one Miſtake, by another, Prejudice.

The Notion of Truth being Naturally pinn'd to that of Knowledge, *Men* fail not to take that for true, which is propoſed to them by thoſe who have the Reputation of being Learned: And, as the number of thoſe which are ſuch only by name, is far greater than of theſe who are ſo indeed; the generality of *Men* (who only count Heads) do rank themſelves amongſt the former; and do ſo much the more willingly embrace their Opinions, as they find them conformable to ſuch as they have already entertained.

Wherefore, ſeeing that *Poets*, *Orators*, *Hiſtorians* and *Philoſophers*, proclaim (likewiſe) *VVomen* to be Inferiour, leſs Noble, and Perfect, than *Men*,

Men, they perſwade themſelves thereof the more, becauſe they are ignorant, that their Knowledg is the ſame Prejudice with their own (though of ſome-what greater extent, and more ſpecious); and that they do no more, but joyne, to the Impreſſion of Cuſtom the Sentiments of the Antients; upon the Authority of whom, all their Certainty is grounded. And I find, that (in reſpect of their Sex) they that have ſtudied, and they that have no Reading, fall commonly into the ſame Miſtake; which is, To judge, that whatſoever they (whom they eſteem) do ſay, is true; becauſe, they are already perſwaded, that they ſay well; inſtead of forbearing to think that they ſay well, till that they are aſſured, that they ſpeak nothing but what is true.

Poets and *Orators*, having no other Deſigne but to pleaſe and perſwade; Probability, and appearance of Truth, ſerves them to deal with the moſt part of *Men*: So that, Exaggerations and Hyperbolies, being moſt proper to that purpoſe, in Magnifying and Raiſing their Notions, according as they have

have need, they render Good or Evil, Small or Great, at their Pleaſure: And, by a very ordinary fetch, they attribute to all *VVomen* in general, that which they find but in ſome of them in particular. It is enough to them, to have known ſome *VVomen* Hypocrites, to make them ſay, That the whole Sex is Guilty of that Failing. The Ornaments with which they ſet off their Diſcourſe, do wonderfully contribute to gain them the Credit of ſuch, as are not upon their Guard. They ſpeak ſmoothly, and with Grace; and imploy ſome certain, pretty, taking (and not common) Formes of Speech; whereby they dazle the Mind, and hinder the diſcerning of Truth.

Men ſee a great many peeces (in appearance) very ſtrong againſt *Women*, and yeild thereunto; becauſe they know not what it is, that makes up the Force and Verity thereof; that it is only the Figures of Eloquence, Metaphors, Proverbs, Deſcriptions, Similitudes, Emblems, and other Flowers of *Rhetorick*: And, becauſe that there is ordinarily a good deal of Wit and Art in ſuch kind of Works,

they

they imagine (likewiſe) that there is as much of Truth.

One perſwades himſelf, that *VVomen* love to hear Tales told them; becauſe he hath (perhaps) read the Sonnet of *Sarrazin*, upon the Fall of the firſt *Woman*; whom he feignes only to have ſlipt, for lending her Ear to the Flouriſhes of the Devil. It is true, the Fancy is pleaſing, the Caſt pretty, the Application proper enough to his Deſigne, and the Fall moſt Ingenious: But, if we examine the Piece to the bottom, and turn it into Proſe, we ſhall find, that there can be nothing more falſe or faint.

There are ſome People ſilly enough to imagine, that *VVomen* are more inclined to Fury than *Men*; becauſe they have read, that the Poets have repreſented the Furies under the ſhape of *VVomen*; without conſidering, that this is only a Poetical Fancy: And that Painters, who paint the Harpyes with the face of a *VVoman*, paint likewiſe the Devil under the Appearance of a *Man*.

I have known, ſome undertake to prove *Women* Inconſtant, from this, That a famous *Latin* Poet hath ſaid, That they are ſubject to a continual Change; and that another *French Poet* hath pleaſantly compared them to a Weather-Cock, which turns with the Wind; Not minding, that all theſe manners of ſpeaking are onely fit to tickle, but not inſtruct, the Mind.

Vulgar Eloquence is a ſpeaking Optick, which repreſents Objects under what ſhape and colour *Men* pleaſe; and there is not any Vertue, which may not be made appear Vice, by the Means which Eloquence affords.

There is nothing more ordinary, than to find among the Authors, that *Women* are not ſo noble or perfect as *Men*; but, for Reaſons, we ſee none: So that, there is great likely-hood, that they have taken their Perſwaſions as the Vulgar do.

Women have no ſhare with us in External Advantages, as Sciences and Authority, wherein *Men* commonly place Perfection; and therefore, they are not ſo perfect as we.

But,

But, to be ſeriouſly convinced of this, it ought to be proved, That they are not thereto admitted, becauſe they are not at all proper; but that is not ſo eaſie as *Men* conceive: Nor ſhall it be difficult (in the Sequel) to make the contrary appear; and that the Errour ariſeth from this, That *Men* have but a confuſed Notion of Perfection and Nobility.

All the Arguments of thoſe who maintain, That the lovely Sex is neither ſo Noble, nor Excellent as ours, are founded on this, That *Men* being the Maſters, they believe that all is their own: And I am aſſured, that they would more ſtrongly believe the contrary, (I mean, that the *Men* are only cut out for the *VVomen*) if they had all the Authority in their Hands, as in the Empire of the *Amazons*.

It is true, that here amongſt us they diſcharge no Offices, but what are eſteemed the Loweſt: And, it is alſo true, that (upon that account) neither Religion, nor Reaſon, values them the leſs. There is nothing baſe and low but Vice, nor great but Vertue: And, *VVomen* ſhewing greater Vertue

Vertue than *Men* (in their leſſer Imployments), deſerve likewiſe to be more eſteemed. And yet, I know not, whether (in regard of their ordinary Charge, which is to Nurſe and Bring-up their Children) they are not worthy of the firſt Place in Civil Society.

Were we free, and without Common-Wealth, we would not aſſemble our ſelves together; but for the better Preſervation of Life, in the peaceable Enjoyment of thoſe things which are neceſſary thereto; and would have greater Eſteem for thoſe who ſhould hereunto contribute in greateſt meaſure.

It is by reaſon of this, that we are accuſtomed to look on our Prince, as the chief Perſon of the State; becauſe his Care and Fore-ſight is the moſt general, and of greateſt Extent; and, by Proportion, we Reſpect thoſe that are under him. Moſt part of *Men* preferr Souldiers to Judges, becauſe they directly oppoſe themſelves to thoſe who (in moſt terrible manner) attack our Lives; and every one ſets a Value upon Perſons, as they judge them

them more or leſs uſeful. So that, *Women* ſeem to be the moſt Eſtimable, ſince their Service (which they render to the Publick) is incomparably greater than that of all others whoſoever.

Men might abſolutely diſpenſe with Princes, Souldiers, and Merchants, as they did in the beginning of the World; and as Savages do ſtill, even to this Day: But, in our Infancy, we cannot be without *Women*. In States that are well pacified, the moſt part of thoſe who have Authority, are as *Men* dead and uſcleſs; but *Women* never ceaſe to be neceſſary to us. The Miniſters of Juſtice are only proper to preſerve Goods and Eſtates, to thoſe who poſſeſs them; but *Women*, to preſerve Life. Souldiers are employed for *Men*, grown up, and capable to defend themſelves; but *Women* labour for *Men*, when as yet they know not what they are, if they have Enemies, or Friends; and at that time, when they have no other Arms but Tears, againſt ſuch as attack them. Maſters, Magiſtrates, and Princes, do not often-times beſtir them-

themſelves, but for Glory, and particular Intereſt; when *Women* do nothing but for the good of the Children, whom they breed. In ſhort The Pains, the Cares, the Troubles, and Aſſiduities, to which they expoſe themſelves, can in no wiſe be matched in any other ſtate (of Civil Society) whatſoever.

There is nothing (then) but Fancy, which renders them leſs Valuable. *Men* would largely Reward him who had tamed a Tyger: Such who have the Skill to train Horſes, Apes, and Elephants, are well conſidered of; and we ſpeak, with Elogy, of a *Man* that hath compoſed a ſmall Work, which hath coſt him but little time and pains; And ſhall we neglect *Women*, that ſpend many Years in breeding and forming of Children? If we enquire into the Reaſon thereof, we ſhall find, it is, Becauſe the one is (onely) more ordinary than the other.

What *Hiſtorians* ſay to the Prejudice of *Women*, makes deeper Impreſſion on the Minds of *Men*, than the Diſcourſes of *Orators*; For, as they

they ſeem to put forth nothing of their own Heads, ſo is their Teſtimony leſs ſuſpected: Beſides, that it is ſuitable to that whereof *Men* are already perſwaded, when they report *Women* to have been in former times, the ſame which they are believed to be at preſent. But all the Authority which they have upon the ſpirits of *Men*, is nothing but a very common Prejudice, in regard of Antiquity; which *Men* repreſent to themſelves, under the Image of a Venerable Old *Man*, who (having much Wiſdom and Experience) is uncapable of being deceived, or of ſpeaking any thing but Truth.

Whil'ſt, in the mean time, the Antients are no leſs *Men* than we are, and as much ſubject to Errour; and we ought no more at preſent to aſſent to their Opinions, than we would have done in their own times. *Men* heretofore conſidered *Women* as now they do, and with as little Reaſon: So, whatſoever *Men* ſay concerning that, ought to be ſuſpected; ſeeing they are both Judge and Party. And when any one brings againſt them the

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Sentiments of a thousand Authors, that History is only to be considered, as a Tradition of Prejudices and Mistakes. There is, also, as little Fidelity and Exactitude in Antient *Histories*, as there is in Familiar Rehearsals; wherein we sufficiently know, that there is (almost) none at all. They that have wrote *Them*, have there-with mingled their Passions and Interest; and the most part (having but had confused Notions of Vice and Vertue) have often mistaken the one for the other. And those, who likewise Read *Them* (with the ordinary Pre-occupation) fail not to run into the same Fault.

In the Prejudice wherein they have been engaged, they have made it their business, to exaggerate and raise the Vertues, and Advantages, of their own Sex; and to debase and weaken the Merit of *VVomen*, by a contrary Interest: This is so easie to be discovered, that I need not adduce Instances.

Notwithstanding, if we can but a little rip-up what is past, we may find enough to prove, that *Women* have not in any

any thing yielded to men; and that the Vertue which they have made appear, hath been more excellent: if we sincerely consider all the Circumstances thereof, we may observe, that they have giv'n as great markes of Wit, and Capacity, upon all occasions; That there have been some who have governed great States and Empires with Wisdom, and moderation, that cannot be parallel'd: others who have rendred Justice with an integrity equall to that of the *Athenian Areopagites*; Many, who by their prudence, and counsells, have restablished peace, and tranquillity to Kingdomes, and a throne to their Husbands. Some have been seen at the head of Armies, or with a courage more than *Heroical* defending themselves upon the walls of Townes. How many have there been, whose Chastity could receive no blemish, neither by the terrible threats, nor splendid promises which men made to them, and who with a Generous, and astonishing Gallantry, have endured the most horrible torments, for the cause of Religion! How many have there been, who have rendered themselves as compleat as

men

men in all ſorts of Sciences! who have dived into the moſt Curious Secrets of Nature, the moſt quaint of Policy, the moſt ſolid of Morality, and who have Elevated themſelves to the higheſt Pitch of Chriſtian Divinity! So that Hiſtory, which the prejudiced abuſe againſt that Sex to abaſe it, may ſerve to thoſe who look thereon with the eyes of equity, to prove that it is in all reſpects as noble as our own.

The Authority of Laws has a great Weight upon many men, as to that which concerns the *Women*, becauſe they make particular profeſſion of rendering to every one their right. They place the Wives under the Juridiction of their Husbands, as children under the power of their fathers; and alledge, that it is Nature that hath aſſigned them the ſmaller functions of Society, and placed them at diſtance from publick Authority.

Men think themſelves ſufficientlygrounded to ſay the ſame after them: but I hope it is lawfull without wounding the Reſpect which is their due, to differ from them in Judgment. We ſhould ſtrangely puzzle them, If we obliged them

them to explain themſelves intelligibly about that which they call Nature in this caſe, and make us underſtand in what manner ſhe hath diſtinguiſhed the two Sexes, as they pretend.

We muſt conſider that they who have made or compiled the Law, be-being men, have favoured their own Sex, as *VVomen* poſſibly might have done had they been in their place: And Laws being made ſince the Conſtitution of Societies in the ſame manner in reſpect of *Women* as they are at preſent; the Lawyers who had likewiſe their prejudice, have attributed to Nature a diſtinction, which is only drawen from Cuſtome, beſides that it was not at all neceſſary to change the order which they found ſetl d, for obtaining the end that they propoſed, which was the good government of a State by the adminiſtration of juſtice. To be ſhort, if they ſhould be head-ſtrong, to hold, that *Women* are naturally in a condition of dependance upon men, we might fight them with their own weapons, ſince they themſelves acknowledge dependance, and ſervitude, to be contrary to the order of Nature, which renders all mankind equal.

Dependence being a meer Corporal, and Civil Relation, ought not to be considered but as an effect of chance, force, or custome; except in the case of Children to those who have given them life. And yet neither does that pass a certain age, wherein men being supposed to have reason, and experience enough to guide themselves, are freed by the Lawes, from the authority of an other.

Amongst persons of an equal or not much different age, there ought only to be a reasonable subordination, according to which those who have less understanding, willingly submit themselves to such as have more. And if we remove the Civil Priviledges, which the Laws have bestowed on men, and which establish them heads of the family; we cannot find betwixt them, and their wives, any other submission but that of Experience, and Knowledge: both one, and other freely engage themselves at the same time, when the VVives have asmuch, and often more Judgment than the Husbands. Their Promises and Covenants of Marriage are reciprocal; and the power equal upon

one

one and others Body; And if the Lawes give the Husband more Authority over the estate, Nature allowes the Wife more power, and right, over the Children. And as the will of the one is not the Rule of the other; if the wife be obliged to do what the Husband minds her of, he is no less bound to follow the advertisements of the Wife, when she tells him his duty: And, except it be in matters just, and reasonable, the Wife is not to be constrained to submit her self to the pleasure of her Husband, unless you'l say that he is stronger; which is the dealing of a *Turk* with a *Moore*, and not of *Men* of reason.

We shall not need much trouble to rid our selves of the opinion of the Learned, of whom I have spoken: because we may easily be satisfied that their profession does not engage them to so exact an enquiry into the nature of things; Appearances, and probabilities, are sufficient for Poets and Orators; The Testimony of Antiquity to Historians; And Custome and Practice to Lawyers, to bring them to their intended end; But as to the Sentiment of

Philoſophers, we muſt not ſo eaſily paſs it; ſeeing that they ſeem to be above all the preceding conſiderations, as indeed they ought to be; and that they are thought to try matters more ſtrictly; which gaines them the common credit, and makes it believed unqueſtionable what they aſſert, eſpecially when they contradict not the received opinions.

So the common People confirm themſelves in the opinion, that there is inequality betwixt the two Sexes, becauſe they ſee thoſe whoſe Judgements they regard as the meaſures of their own, and the ſame opinion; not knowing that the moſt part of *Philoſophers* walk by no other Rule than that of the Vulgar, and that it is not by Vertue of Science or Knowledge, that they often dictate eſpecially concerning the matter in hand. They have carryed their prejudices even to the Schools, where they have learned nothing that might ſerve to diſengage them there-from: On the contrary, all their Science is founded upon the Judgements that they have made from their Cradle; And with them it is a crime or Er-

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rour to call in queſtion that which they believed before the years of diſcretion. They are not taught to know *Man* by the body, nor by the ſoul: And that which they teach, commonly may very well ſerve to prove, that betwixt us, and beaſts, there is no other difference, but that of Leſſer and Greater in the Same kind. They hear not a word of Sexes: They are ſuppoſed to know them ſufficiently already; Very far from Examining the Capacity, and real and natural difference, betwixt them; which is one of the moſt curious, and probably alſo the moſt important Queſtion of all natural or Moral *Philoſophy*. They ſpend whole years, and ſome all their lives, at Trifles, and *Entia Rationis*, being no where to be found without their own Brains; and to plod and find-out, whether or not, there be beyond the world imaginary Spaces; and whether the atoms or ſmall duſt which appeares in the Beams of the Sun, may be ſliced out into infinite parts. What ſolid ground can we lay upon, what the learned of this kind ſay, when we are to treat of ſerious, and important matters?

Men may think, nevertheless, that (though they be so ill taught themselves, yet) their Principles (probably) are sufficient to discover, which of the two Sexes have (naturally) the advantage of the other; But none can think so, but such who either know them not, or are pre-possessed thereby. The Knowledge of our selves, is absolutely necessary to enable us, for the handling of that Question aright; and especially, the knowledge of our Body, which is the Organ of Sciences; after the same manner, as for to know how Telescopes, and Glasses of Approach, magnifie the Objects: we must know the Fashion of them. They touch not this but in passing, no more than they do Truth, and Science; I mean, the Method of acquiring true and certain Knowledges; without which, it is impossible to examine, Whether or not *VVomen* be as capable thereof, as our selves? And, without amusing my self to repeat the Notions that they give us thereon, I shall declare (in general) what my Thoughts are thereof.

All

All Man-kind being made alike, have the ſame Sentiments, and Notions, of Natural things; for example, of Light, Heat, and Hardneſs; And all the Knowledge which we labour to gain there-from, is reduced to this, That we may truly find out what is the Diſpoſition (internal and external) of every Object, which produceth in us the thoughts, and conceits, which we have of them. All that Maſters can do, to guide us to this Knowledge, is but, So to apply our Minds to what we remark, that we may examine the Appearances and Effects thereof, without Precipitation or Prejudice; and to ſhew us the Order, which we are to obſerve in the ranking of our Thoughts, for to find what we look for.

For inſtance, If an Illiterate Perſon ſhould deſire me to explain to him, Wherein conſiſts the Liquidity of Water; I would not aſſert any thing, but only ask him, What he had obſerved thereof? How, that if Water be not contained in a Veſſel, it ſheds? that is to ſay, that all the Parts thereof ſeparate and diſ-unite of themſelves,

without the Intermixtion of any other Body; that we may thruſt there into our Fingers without trouble, and without finding Reſiſtance as from harder Bodies? And that, in putting therein, Sugar or Salt, we perceive, that theſe two Bodies diſſolve piece and piece; and that all the Parcels thereof are diſperſed through the ſeveral parts of the Liquor.

Hitherto, I ſhould teach him no new thing; And if (after the ſame manner) I had told him, What it is to be in Repoſe, or in Motion; I ſhould have brought him to acknowledge, that the Nature of Liquors conſiſt in this, That their inſenſible Particles are in perpetual Motion; which requires them to be encloſed in a Veſſel, and diſpoſes them to give eaſie Entry to hard Bodies: And that the Particles of Water, which are little, glib, and pointed, (inſinuating themſelves into the Pores of the Sugar) ſhake and divide the Parts thereof, by their Juſtling; and, moving themſelves every way, tranſport with them into all the Quarters of the Veſſel, that which they have ſeparated.

This

This Notion of Liquors (which is a Part, taken from the Body of Natural *Philoſophy*) would appear a great deal more clear, if we ſaw it in its proper Place and Order: and it hath nothing, which the meaneſt ſort of *Women* are not able to underſtand. The reſt of all our Knowledges (being propoſed in Order and Method) have no greater Difficulty: And if we conſider attentively, we ſhall find, that every Science of Reaſoning, requires but leſs wit and time, than is neceſſary to learn to make Point or Tapiſtry.

In effect, the Notions of Natural things are neceſſary, and we form them alwayes after the ſame manner: *Adam* had them as we have; *Children* have them as Old *Men*, and *Women* as *Men*: And theſe *Idea*'s are renewed, confirmed, and entertained, by the continual uſe of Senſe. The Mind is alwayes in Action; and he that knows well how it proceeds in one thing, diſcovers (without trouble) how it works in all others. There is nothing (but More and Leſs) betwixt the Impreſſion made by the *Sun*, and

that of a Spark of *Fire*: And, to think well thereon, there is neither need of great Skill, nor Exercise of Body.

It is not so, in the Works of which I have spoken. There is need of greater Application of Spirit; the *Idea*'s thereof being Arbitrary, are harder to be learned, and retained; which is the cause, that so much time is necessary for to Learn (well) a Trade, because it depends on long Exercise. There is Skill required, rightly to observe the Proportions on a Canvas; to Distribute equally the Silk or the Wool; to mingle with Exactness the Colours; neither to joyne too close, nor keep too open, the Points; to place no more in one Rank, than in another; to make the little Knots imperceptible. In a word, One must know to make and vary, in a thousand different Wayes the Works of Art, to be skillful therein; when, as in Sciences, there is no more required, but an orderly viewing of Works already made, and alwayes Uniform: and, all the difficulty of Success therein, proceeds more from the Incapaci-

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ty of Masters, than from the Objects, or Disposition of the Body.

We must not then (any more) wonder to see *Men*, and *VVomen*, (without Study) entertain themselves, about things which concern Sciences; since the Method of Teaching of them, serves only to certifie our Judgements, which are confounded by Precipitation, Custom, and Use.

The Notion which we have given of Knowledge (in general) might suffice to perswade unprejudiced Persons, That *Men* and *VVomen* are equally capable thereof; But, because the contrary Opinion is most deeply rooted, we must (for the intire plucking of it up) Fight it by Principles; to the end, that (joyning the Appearances, agreeing to the Beautiful Sex, which have been presented in the First Part, with the Natural Reasons which we shall here-after adduce) *Men* may fully be convinced, in favour of it.

That

That Women (*considered according to the Principles of Sound* Philosophy) *are as capable as* Men, *of all Sorts of Sciences.*

IT is easie to be Remarked, That the Difference of Sexes, regards only the Body: there being no other, but that Part (properly) which serves for the Production of *Men:* And, the Spirit concurring no other way but by its Consent (which it lends to all after the same manner) we may conclude, That in it there is no Sex at all.

If we consider it in our selves, we find it equal, and of the same Nature in all *Men*, and capable of all sorts of Thoughts; The smallest busie it as well as the greatest; and there is no less required to the right knowing of a *Gnat*, than of an *Elephant:* Whosoever knows wherein consists the Light (and Fire) of a Sparkle, knows also, the Light of the *Sun*. When we are accustomed to reflect on things which only concern the Spirit, we perceive therein all (at least) as clearly, as in the

the moſt material things which are diſcerned by the ſenſes. I can diſcover no greater difference between the Spirit of a dull, and ignorant man, and of that one who is delicate, and ingenious, than betwixt the Spirit of the ſame man conſidered at the age of ten years, and at the age of Fourty: And ſince there appeareth no more betwixt that of the two Sexes, we may affirm, that their difference is not on that ſide, the conſtitution of the body; But particularly the Education, Exerciſe, and the impreſſions that come from all that does ſurround us, being every where the Natural, and Senſible cauſes of ſo many diverſities as are obſerved therein.

It is God who unites the Soul to the body of a *Woman*, as to that of a *Man*, and who joynes them by the ſame Lawes. The ſentiments, the paſſions, and inclinations, make and entertain that Union; And the Spirit operating after the ſame manner in the one as well as the other, is there equally capable of the ſame things.

This is yet more clear, when we conſider onely the Head, the ſole or-

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gate of Sciences, and where the ſoul exerciſeth all its functions; the moſt exact Anatomy remarks to us no difference in this part between *Men*, and *Women*, their brain is altogether like to ours: The impreſſions of ſenſe are received, and muſter themſelves there in the ſame faſhion, and are no otherwiſe preſerved for Imagination, and Memory. *Women* hear, as we do, by the ears; they ſee by the eyes; and they taſt with the Tongue; And there is nothing peculiar in the diſpoſition of theſe Organs, but that the *Women* have them ordinarily more delicate, which is an advantage. So that the outward objects affects them after the the ſame manner, Light by the eyes, and Sound by the eares. Who can hinder them then to apply themſelves to the conſideration of themſelves? To Examine in what conſiſts the nature of the ſoul; how many kinds of thoughts there are, and how they are excited by occaſion of certain corporeal Motions; to conſult afterwards the natural Notions, which they have of God; and to begin with things Spiritual to diſpoſe in order their thoughts, and to

frame to themſelves that Science we call, the *Metaphyſicks?* no.

Since they have alſo eyes, and hands, may they not make themſelves, or ſee others perform, the diſſection of an humane body? conſider the Symmetry, and ſtructure thereof; obſerve the diverſity, difference, and relation of its parts: their figures, their motion, and functions; the Alterations to which they are Subject? and to conclude, on the means to preſerve them in good diſpoſition, and to reſtore it to them, when it is changed.

They need no more for this, but to know the nature of Extrinſical bodies, which have any reference to their own, diſcover their Properties, and all that renders them capable of making any impreſſion good or bad thereon; this is known by the aid of the Senſes, and by the various Experiments that are made upon them: And *Women* being equally capable of the one as well as the other, might learn as well as we, *Phyſick* and Medicine.

Is there need of ſo much underſtanding, to know, that Breathing is abſolutely neceſſary for the preſervation of

of life; and that it is performed by the means of the Air, which entering by the pipe of the nose and mouth, is insinuated into the lungs, for the cooling of the blood which passeth that way in Circulation, and there causeth different Alterations, according as it is more or less Grosse by the Mixture of Vapours, and Exhortations, with which we see it sometimes blended.

Is it a matter so difficult to discover, that the tast of Food consists on the part of the body (in the different manner how it is allayed on the tongue) by the Spittle? There is no Person, but finds after meals, that the Victuals which then are put into the mouth, being divided quite otherways than those with which we are Nourished, cause there a Sensation less pleasing. That which remains to be known of the Functions of Mans body, being considered in order, have nothing more of difficulty.

The Passions are certainly that which is most Curious in this matter: We may therein observe two things, the Motions of the body, with the thoughts and stirrings of the Soul, which concurr

curr in them. *Women* may know this, as easily as we do And as to the causes which excite Passions, we know how they do it When we have once by the study of Natural Philosophy comprehended their manner, how Circumambient things affect and touch us; And by experience, and use, how we thereto apply, or separate, our wills and inclinations.

In making regular Meditations upon the objects of the three Sciences lastly spoken of, a *Woman* may observe, that the order of her thoughts ought to follow that of Nature; that then they are exact when they are conform thereto; that there is nothing but hast, and precipitation in our Judgements, which hinders that exactitude. And marking consequentially the Oeconomy which she hath observed to attain thereto, she may make Reflections, which may serve her as a Rule for the future, and form to her-self there-from a Logick.

If it be objected notwithstanding of this, That *Women* by themselves could never acquire these knowledges, (which is but said); at least we cannot deny, but that with the help of Masters

Masters, and Books, they might; As the ablest men in all ages have done.

It is enough to alledge the acknowledged property of the Sex, to prove it capable of understanding the proportions of the Mathematicks: And we should contradict our selves to doubt, that if it applyed it self to the making of Engines, it would succeed as well therein as our own; since we our selves allow it more invention and artifice.

There is need but of eyes, and a little attention, in observing the Appearances of nature, To make us remark that the Sun, and all the Luminous bodyes of the Heavens, are real Fires, since they heat, and light us, in the same manner as the Fires here below; that they appear'd successively to answer to several parts of the earth, and so be able to judge of their Motion and Course: And whosoever can roul in his head great designs, and set to work the Movements thereof, may there likewise with exactness turn the whole Machin of the World, if he have but once well observed

ved the diverſe Appearances of the ſame.

We have already found in *Women*, all the Diſpoſitions which render *Men* proper for the Sciences, which concern them (ſeparately) in themſelves: And, if we continue to conſider them within diſtance, we ſhall alſo find in them thoſe which are neceſſary for the Sciences, which regard them, as tyed altogether with their like in Civil Society.

It is a Fault in *Vulgar Philoſophy*, to place amongſt Sciences ſo great a Diſtinction; that, following that peculiar Method of it, we cannot acknowledge any Tye or Coherence amongſt them: which is the cauſe, that we reſtrain ſo much the Extent of Humane Underſtanding; imagining to our ſelves, that the ſame *Man* is never (almoſt) capable of many Sciences; that, to be fit for *Natural Philoſophy* or *Medicine*, one is not thereby proper for *Rhetorick*, or *Divinity*: and that there ought to be as many different Capacities, as there are Sciences, in the World.

This

This Thought proceeds on the one hand, from this, That *Men* confound (ordinarily) Nature with Cuſtome; in taking the Diſpoſition of certain Perſons to one Science, rather than another, for an Effect of their Natural Conſtitution; when indeed, it is often but a Caſual Inclination, coming from Neceſſity, Education, or Habit: And, on the other hand, for want of having Remarked, that there is (properly) but one Science in the World, which is the Knowledge of our ſelves; and, that all others are onely particular Applications thereof.

In effect, the Difficulty which we find at this day to learn the Tongues, Moral Philoſophy, and the reſt; conſiſts only in this, That we know not how to referr them to this general Science: From whence, it may have arrived, That all thoſe who have believed *Women* capable of *Natural Philoſophy* and *Medicine*, may not have therefore judged them capable of the Sciences that we are to ſpeak of. However, the Difficulty is the ſame on both ſides: It is the buſineſs in All, to

to think aright: And this we do, by applying seriously our Minds, to the Objects which represent themselves to us; that we may raise from them clear and distinct Notions; that we may eye them in all their different Faces and Relations, and that we may pass no Judgement thereon, but upon what appears manifestly true. With this we need no more, but to dispose our Thoughts in a Natural Order, for the obtaining of a perfect Science: And here, there is nothing too High for *Women*; For, such of them who may be (by this way) instructed in *Natural Philosophy* and *Medicine*, may likewise (by the same) become capable of all others.

Wherefore, might they not perceive, that the necessity of living in Society, obliging us to Communicate our Thoughts by some External Signes; the most expedient of all others, is Speech; which consists in the use of Words, agreed on amongst *Men*, That we ought to have as many of them, as we have Notions of things? That they ought to have some Relation

tion of Sound and Signification one with another, to make us learn and retain them with more eaſe, and that we ſhould not be forced to multiply them infinitely? That they muſt be Marſhalled in the Order moſt natural, and ſuitable, to our Thoughts; and that we ſhould not employ more in Diſcourſe, than what may be enough to make us be underſtood?

Theſe Reflexions might put a *Woman* in Condition, to labour (like a Virtuoſi) for the perfecting of her Mother-Tongue; by reforming, and cutting off the bad Words, introducing of New, Regulating Cuſtom by Reaſon, and the true Notions which we have of Languages: And the Method, by which ſhe might have Learned the Language of her Country, would wonderfully help her to the attaining of that of Strangers, to diſcover the Delicacies thereof, to read Authors, and to become moſt exact in *Grammar*, and that which is called *Humanity*.

Women (as well as *Men*) Diſcourſe of things, to make them be underſtood,

ſtood, in the ſame manner, as they know them; and to diſpoſe others to do as they would have them, which is called Perſwading: In this they Naturally ſucceed better than we. And yet, to perform it ſtill with Art, they have no more to do, but to ſtudy to repreſent things, as they preſent themſelves to them; or as they would repreſent them to themſelves, if they were in the Place of thoſe whom they would affect.

All *Men* (being made after the ſame manner) are (almoſt) alwayes moved in like manner by Objects; And, if there be any Difference, it proceeds from their Inclinations, their Habits, or their Quality; which a *VVoman* might know with a little Reflexion, and Cuſtom: And, being able to diſpoſe her Thoughts in the manner moſt convenient, expreſs them neatly, and with Grace; adding thereto, the Geſtures, the Air of the Countenance, and the Voice, ſhe might become Miſtreſs of the moſt perfect Eloquence.

It is not credible, that *VVomen* can ſo highly practiſe Vertue, without being able

able to penetrate into the Fundamental Maxims thereof: In effect, a *Woman* already so instructed as we above represented her, might discover of her self the Measures of her Conduct, by discovering the three kinds of Duties which comprehend all Morality; of which, the first regards *God*, the second our Selves, and the third our Neighbour. The clear and distinct Notions, which she may have formed of her Spirit, and the Union thereof with the Body, must (infallibly) lead her to acknowledge, That there is another Spirit Infinite, the Author of all Nature; and to entertain of Him the Sentiments, upon which Religion is founded. And after, having (by *Natural Philosophy*) learned wherein it is, that Sensual Pleasure does consist, and in what manner External Things contribute to the Perfection of the Mind, and the Preservation of the Body; she cannot fail to conclude, That we must be great Enemies to our selves, if we use them not with great Moderation. And, if she come, in Sequel, to consider her Self, as engaged in Civil Society, with others

others of the ſame Nature, ſubject to the ſame Paſſions, and to the neceſſities (which can not be ſatisfied without mutual aſſiſtance); ſhe muſt without trouble fall upon this thought upon which depends all our Juſtice, That we ought to do to others as we would be done to; and, that we ought to bridle thoſe deſires, whereof the exorbitancy which is called Luſting or Covetouſneſs, occaſions all the trouble, and all the unhappineſs of life.

She might the more ſtill confirm her ſelf in the perſwaſion of the laſt of theſe duties, if ſhe advanced, and carried on her thoughts, to the point of diſcovering the ground of Policy, and of Law and Juſtice. And, as both the one and other, only regard the duties of men amongſt themſelves, ſhe would judge, that, Fully to comprehend to what it is that they are obliged in civil Society, we muſt underſtand what it is that hath inclined men to eſtabliſh it. She would then conſider them as out of any ſuch Society, and find them all intirely free, and equal, with the deſire only to preſerve themſelves, and a right alike to all upon every

thing that might be neceſſary thereto. But ſhe finding that this equality engageth men in warr, or continual miſtruſt (a thing contrary to their end) the light of nature would dictate, that they could not live in peace, without that every one yeelded ſome what of his right, and came to covenants, and contracts: And that to render theſe Actions valid, and ſtop all Jealouſiy, it would be neceſſary to have recourſe to a third perſon, who taking upon him Authority, might force every one to perform what they had promiſed to others; That he being choſen only for the good of his ſubjects, ought to have no other deſigne; And that to obtain the end of his inſtitution, it is neceſſary he ſhould be the Maſter of Lives, and Eſtates; of Peace and of Warr.

In Examining this matter, and the depth, what would hinder a Woman that ſhe ſhould not diſcover, What natural equity is; What are Contract, Authority, and Obedience; what is the nature of Law, the uſe of Penalties; wherein conſiſt the civil Law, and that of Nations; what are the duties of

Princes,

Princes, and of Subjects: And in a word, by her proper Reflexions, and by Books, she might learn all that is necessary to make a Lawyer and a States-man.

After that, she may have obtained a perfect knowledge of her self, and be solidly instructed in the general rules of the conduct of Men, Probably she would become curious to inform her self also how it is that men live in strange Countreys. And as she had observed, that the changes of weather, of seasons, of place, of age, of dyet, company, and exercises, had occasioned in her, alterations and different passions, she needed not much trouble to find that these diversities produce the same effect in regard of whole nations: That they have Inclinations, Customs, Manners, and Laws different according as they are more near, or distant from Seas, the South or North, according as their countrey is plain or mountainous, watered with Rivers, and Woody, the soil more or less fruitfull, the particular kind of Food which it bringeth forth; And according to Commerce, and the affairs which they have with other Neighbouring or

remote people: ſhee might ſtudy all theſe things, and ſo learn what are the Manners, the Riches, the Religon, the Government, and the Intereſts of twenty or thirty different Nations, as eaſily as of ſo many private families. For what concernes the Situation of Kingdomes, how Seas to Lands, Iſles to the Continent do anſwer; there is no more difficulty to learn it in a Mapp, than to know the ſeveral quarters and ſtreets of a Town; or the high-wayes of the country, where one liveth.

The Knowledge of the preſent, might breed in her deſire alſo to know what is paſt: And that which ſhe may have retained of Geography, would afford her great aſſiſtance in this Deſigne, enabling her better to underſtand affairs, as Warrs, Voyages, and Negoations, marking to her the places where they have hapned; the Paſſages, Roads, and the boundings of States. But the skill which ſhe may have obtained of the Tranſactions of men in general, by the reflections which ſhe may have made upon her ſelf, would bring her into the Myſtery of Policy, Intereſt and Paſſions; and help her to diſcover the moving

moving wheele, and ſpring, of enterprizes, the fountain and ſource of revolutions, and to ſupply in great Undertakings the leſſer things which have made them proſper, and which have eſcaped Hiſtories: And following their true Notions, which ſhe hath of Vice, and Vertue; ſhe may obſerve the flattery, paſſion, and ignorance of Authors; and to guard her ſelf from the Corruption, which infect men in reading of Hiſtories, where theſe faults are commonly mingled. As the ancient policy, was not ſo refined as the modern, and the intereſt of Princes leſs conjoynd in former times than at preſent, and commerce of leſs extent; there is more Judgement required to underſtand, and diſentangle our Gazets, than Lives of *Quintus Curtius*.

There are a great many perſons that find the *Eccleſiaſtick Hiſtory* more pleaſing and ſolid, than civil or prophane: becauſe, there they find the effects of Reaſon, and Vertue farther purſued, and that paſſions, and prejudices covered with a pretext of Religion, ſets the mind upon a method, altogether particular in its conduct. A

Woman would apply her self thereto with so much more affection, as she judged it more important. She might convince her self, that the books of *Scripture*, are as authentick, as all the others which we have; that they containe the true Religion, and all the Maxims whereon it is founded; that the *New Testament* where the History of Christianity properly begins, is no more difficult to be understood, than *Greek* and *Latin Authors*; that they that read it with the simplicity of Children, seeking only the Kingdome of God, discover the truth, and meaning thereof with more ease and pleasure, than that of ridles, emblems, and fables; And after having regulated her mind by the Morality of *Jesus Christ*, she may find her self in condition to direct others; remove their scruples, and to resolve Cases of conscience, with more solidity than if she had filled her head with all the Casuists in the world.

I see nothing that could hinder, but that in the progress of her studies, she might observe as well as a man, How it is that the Gospel hath passed from hand to hand, from Kingdom to Kingdom,

dom, from age to age, even to her own times, but that ſhe might gain, by reading of the Fathers, the Notion of true Theology, and find out that it only conſiſts in the Knowledge of the Hiſtory of Chriſtians; and the Particular Sentiments of thoſe that have written thereon. So, ſhe might render her ſelf able to compoſe Works of Religion, Preach the Truth, and batter down Novelties, by ſhewing what hath been alwayes Believed through the whole Church, about the Matters in Controverſie.

If a *Woman* be capable to inform her ſelf from *Hiſtory*, of the Nature of all Publick Societies, how they have been formed, and how they are preſerved by virtue of a fixed and conſtant Authority, exerciſed by Magiſtrates and Officers, ſubordinate to one another; ſhe is no leſs, to Learn the Application of that Authority, by Laws, Ordinations, and Conſtitutions, for the Conduct of thoſe who are ſubmitted thereunto, as well to the Relation of Perſons (according to their ſeveral Conditions) as for the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of Goods. Is it a thing ſo difficult, to know the

Relation between a Husband and his Wife, between a Father and his Children, the Maſter and his Servants, the Land-Lord and his Tennants, betwixt thoſe who are Allied in Affinity, betwixt a Guardian and his Pupil? Is it ſo great a Myſtery, to underſtand what it is to poſſeſs by Purchaſe, Exchange, Donation, Legacy, Teſtament, Preſcription, and Uſufruit? and what are the neceſſary Conditions to render Uſe and Poſſeſſion valid?

There appears to be no more Underſtanding requiſite to know (aright) the ſpirit of Chriſtian Society, than that of the Civil; to frame a right Notion of the Authority which is peculiar thereto, and upon which is founded all its Conduct; and to diſtinguiſh (preciſely) betwixt that which *Jeſus Chriſt* hath left to His Church, and the Dominion which onely belongs to Temporal Powers.

After having made that Diſtinction abſolutely neceſſary to the right Underſtanding of the Canon Law, a *Woman* might ſtudy, and obſerve how the Church is Governed in the State; and

and how the Spiritual Jurisdiction is mingled with the Secular; wherein the Hierarchy consists; what are the Offices of Prelates, the Power of Councels, Popes, Bishops, and Pastors; what is the meaning of Discipline, what are the Rules and Changes thereof; what mean Canons, Priviledges, and Exemptions; how Benefices are Established, and what is the Right and Possession thereof. In a word, What are the Customs and Ordinances of the Church, and the Duties of all those that Compose it. There is (therein) nothing at all, whereof a *Woman* is not most capable; and so, she might become most Skilful in the Canon-Law.

These are some general Notions of the Highest Knowledges, where-with *Men* serve themselves, to signalize their Parts, and raise their Fortune; and of which, to the Prejudice of *Women*, they have been so long in Posse on: And, although they have as great right thereto as themselves, *Men* (notwithstanding) entertain such Thoughts, and carry with a Co[illegible] towards them, by so much the more

unjuſt, that nothing like is to be ſeen in the uſe of the Goods of the Body.

It hath been judged expedient, that, for the Peace and ſecurity of Families, Preſcription ſhould take place: my Meaning is, That a *Man*, who (with a good Conſcience, and without trouble or moleſtation) might have enjoyed the Goods of another for a certain ſpace of time, ſhould remain Poſſeſſour thereof, without the After-claims and Pretenſions of any whoſoever. But, it hath never entered into the minds of *Men*, to believe, That ſuch who had fallen from their Poſſeſſions by Neglect or otherwiſe, ſhould be incapable by ſome manner or other, to retrive them; and their Incapacity hath never been conſidered as Natural, but onely Civill.

On the contrary, *Men* have not onely contented themſelves not to call *Women* to a ſhare in Sciences, and Offices, after a long Preſcription againſt them; but have proceeded farther, to fancy, that their Excluſion therefrom, is founded on a natural Indiſpoſition on their Part.

In

In the mean-while, there is nothing in the World more Fantaſtical than that Imagination: For, whether that we conſider the Sciences in themſelves, or that we regard the Organs, which ſerves to acquire them; we ſhall find, that both Sexes are thereto equally diſpoſed. There is but one only way to inſinuate Truth into the Mind (whereof it is the Food), as there is but one to convey Nouriſhment into all ſorts of Stomacks, for the Subſiſtance of the Body: And, as to what concerns the different Diſpoſitions of that Organ, which renders us more or leſs fit for Sciences; if we would fairly and honeſtly acknowledge, Who have the better, we muſt confeſs it to be the *Women*.

We cannot diſagree; but, amongſt *Men*, ſuch as are groſs and material, are commonly ſtupid; and, on the other hand, the more Delicate, alwayes moſt Sprightly. I find the Experience of this too univerſal and conſtant, to ſtand in need (in this place) of the Support of Reaſons: So, the lovely Sex, being of a Temperature more Fine and Delicate than ours, would

would not fail (at least) to match ours, if it applyed it self to Study.

I well fore-see, that this Opinion will not be reliſhed by many; who will find it a little ſtrange: I cannot help that. *Men* think that it concernes the Honour of our Sex to take the Place in All; And I believe it to be Juſtice, to render to every one that which is their right.

In effect, we All (both *Men* and *Women*) have the ſame Right to Truth, ſince the Mind in all of us is alike capable to know it; and that we are (All) affected in the ſame manner, by the Objects that make Impreſſion upon the Body. This Title to Knowledges (which Nature beſtows on All) ſprings from this, That we have All need of them, the one as well as the other. There is no Perſon that ſeeks not to be happy; It is to that, that all our Actions tend; and no Body can be ſolidly ſo, but by clear and diſtinct Knowledges: For, it is in that, that *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, and St. *Paul*, make us believe, will conſiſt the Happineſs of the other Life

Life. A Covetous Man never esteems himself happy, but when he knows that he possesses great Riches: An Ambitious Person, when he perceives that he is above others. In a word, All the Happiness of *Men* (Real or Imaginary) is only placed in Knowledge; that is to say, In the Thought which they have, that they possess the Good which they desire.

It is this which makes me believe, that there is nothing but the Notions of Truth (which we procure by Study, and which are fixt and independant from the Possession or Want of things), that can make up the true Happiness of this Life. For, that which makes that a Covetous Man cannot be happy in the simple Knowledge of Riches, is; Because that, that Knowledge which renders him happy, ought to be joyned with the Enjoyment, or the Imagination of possessing of them for the present: And, when his Imagination presents them to him as distant from him, and out of his Power, he cannot reflect thereon without being afflicted.

It

It is altogether otherwiſe with the Knowledge which we have of our Selves, and of all thoſe which depend thereon; but, particularly, of thoſe which enter into the Society of Life. Since then, that both Sexes are capable of the ſame Felicity, they have Equall Right to all that which conduceth to the obtaining thereof.

When we ſay, That Happineſs conſiſts (chiefly) in the Knowledge of Truth, we exclude not Vertue; On the contrary, we think that it maketh up the moſt Eſſential Part thereof: Yet, a *Man* is not happy by Vertue, but in ſo much as he knoweth that he enjoyes it, or that he endeavours ſo to do; that is to ſay, That although it be ſufficient to make a *Man* eſteemed happy, that we ſee him practiſe Vertue (though he know it not perfectly); and alſo, that ſuch a Practice (with a confuſed and imperfect Knowledge) may contribute to purchaſe the Happineſs of the other Life): yet, it is certain, that he cannot eſteem himſelf ſolidly happy, without he be Conſcious to himſelf that

he

he does good; as he would not at all believe himſelf Rich, without he poſſeſſed Wealth.

The Reaſon why there are ſo few that have a Reliſh of, or Love for, true Vertue, is, Becauſe they know it not; and, not at all minding when they practiſe it, they feel not that Satisfaction which it produceth, and which makes up that Felicity of which we ſpeak. That ariſeth from this, That Vertue is not a ſimple Speculation of Good, to which we are obliged; but an Effective Deſire, which ſprings from the Perſwaſion that we have thereof: And we cannot practiſe it with Delight, without the Reſentment of ſome Emotion; becauſe it happens with it, as with the moſt Excellent Liquors, that ſeem ſome-time bitter, or without Sweetneſs; if, when they are upon the Tongue, the Mind be other-wiſe taken up, and does not apply it ſelf to the Alterations which there they cauſe.

The two Sexes have not only need of Light, to find their Happineſs in the Practiſe of Vertue; but likewiſe, need thereof to practiſe aright. It is

Perſwa-

ſion that ſets us at work; and we are ſo much the more perſwaded of our Duty, as the more perfectly we know it.

That little which we have ſaid here concerning Morality, ſufficeth to inſinuate, that the Knowledge of our ſelves, is moſt important to ſtrengthen the Perſwaſion of the Duties, to which we are obliged. And it would not be difficult to ſhew, how all others contribute thereto; nor to make appear, that the Reaſon why ſo many Perſons practiſe Vertue ſo ill, or fall into Looſeneſs, is only the Ignorance of themſelves, and what they are.

The Reaſon why People commonly believe, That *Men* need not be knowing for to become Vertuous, is, Becauſe we ſee many vitious Perſons, that otherwiſe paſs for Intelligent; from whence, they imagine, that Knowledge is not only unprofitable for Vertue, but even that it is many times deſtructive thereto. And, this Errour renders the moſt part of thoſe who have the Reputation of being more Witty than others, ſuſpect to weak udg-

ments;

ments; and, at the ſame time, makes them flight, and be averſe, from the Higheſt Knowledges.

Men take no notice, that there is nothing but falſe Lights, which caſt and leave *Men* in Diſorder; becauſe that the confuſed Notions (which falſe *Philoſophy* gives us of our Selves, and of that which makes up the Body of our Actions), ſo bemiſts the Mind, that not knowing it ſelf, nor the Nature of the things which ſurround it, nor the Relation which they have to its ſelf; and not being able to bear the weight of Difficulties which preſent themſelves in that obſcurity: it muſt neceſſarily ſuccumb, and abandon it ſelf to its Paſſions; Reaſon being too weak to ſtop it.

It is (then) but a *Panick Fear*, which hath given occaſion to the Capricious Imagination of the Vulgar, That Study and Learning would render *Women* more Wicked and Proud: There is nothing but falſe Knowledge, capable to produce ſo bad an Effect. A *Woman* cannot Learn true Knowledge, without becoming thereby more Humble and Vertuous: And there is nothing

thing more proper to depreſs the Vapours, and to convince her of her Weakneſs, than to conſider all the Movements of her Engine, the Delicateneſs of her Organs, the (almoſt) infinite number of Alterations, and painful Failings, to which ſhe is ſubject.

There is not any Meditation more capable to inſpire Humility, Moderation, and Mildneſs, into a *Man* (whatever he may be), than ſeriouſly to mind (by the Study of Natural *Philoſophy*) the Union and Tye of his Soul with the Body; and to obſerve, that he is obnoxious to ſo many Needs, that the Dependance in which he is (on the moſt tickliſh and delicate Parts of the Body, in his Functions), keep him conſtantly expoſed to a thouſand ſorts of Troubles, and irkſome Agitations; that, what Knowledge ſoever he may have entertained, the leaſt thing in the World is enough (entirely) to confound it; that a little Choler, or Blood, more Hot or Cold than ordinary, may caſt himſelf into Extravagance, Folly, and Madneſs;

and

and make him ſuffer fearful Convulſions.

When ſuch Reflexions ſhould find Acceptance in the Mind of a *Woman*, as well as of a *Man*, they would chaſe thence Pride, far from letting of it in. And, if after having filled her Mind with the beſt of Knowledges, ſhe ſhould call again to her Memory all her by-paſt Conduct, to ſee how ſhe had arrived to the happy ſtate, wherein ſhe might find her ſelf very far from elevating of her ſelf above others; ſhe would ſee enough to humble her the more; ſince that, ſhe would neceſſarily obſerve by that review, that (hereto-fore) ſhe had had an infinite number of Prejudices, which ſhe could not Conquer (but by Strength) againſt the Impreſſions of Cuſtom, Example, and Paſſions; which, in ſpight of her, engaged her to them: That all the Effects which ſhe had made to diſcover Truth, had been almoſt unprofitable: That it hath been, as by Chance, that it hath preſented it ſelf to her; and at that time, when ſhe the leaſt dreamt thereof; and in ſuch Occurrencies, which happen

pen but once in ones Life, and but to very few Persons: From whence, she would infalliibly conclude, That it is unjust, and ridiculous, to slight and despise those who have less Knowledge than our selves, or who embrace contrary Opinions; and that we ought the rather to have Complacency and Compassion for them; because, if they discerne not Truth as we do, it is not their Fault; but, because that it hath not presented it self to them, when they have been in search thereof: and that there is still some Veil, on their Part or ours, that hinders it to appear to their mind, in its full Light. And, considering that she might have held for true, that which she had believed false before, she would judge without doubt, That it might still happen in the Sequel, that she might make new Discoveries; by the which, she might believe false or erroneous, that which had appeared to her most true, and certain.

If there have been some *Women*, who (affected with their Knowledge) have become disdainfull; there are likewise a great many Men that dayly fall into

into the ſame vice; And that ought not to be conſidered as an effect of the Sciences, which they have poſſeſſed, but becauſe men have looked, on them as a Myſtery to the Sex: And as, on the one hand, ſuch knowledges are ordinarily very confuſed; and on the other, they that have them, propoſe to themſelves thereby a particular advantage; it is not to be thought ſtrange that they take occaſion from thence to ſwell, and it is almoſt unavoidably neceſſary that in this condition, it ſhould not be with them, as with thoſe who from a low birth, and fortune, have with difficulty raiſed themſelves to honour, and fame: who ſeeing themſelves advanced to a pitch, to which, few of their quality have been accuſtomed to mount, are ſeized with a giddineſs, which preſents to them, objects quite other-wayes than in themſelves they are. At leaſt, it is moſt probable, that ſeeing the pretended vanity of the learned *VVomen*, is nothing in compariſon of that of the learned men, who arrogate to themſelves, the title of Maſters and Sages: *VVomen* would be leſs Subject thereunto, if their Sex were

were admitted into equal ſhare wth ours, of the advantages which occaſion it.

It is then a vulgar Errour to fancy, that Learning is uſeleſs to *Women*, becauſe ſayes one, they have no ſhare in Offices, for the which, men apply themſelves thereto. It is as neceſſary to them as Felicity, and Vertue; becauſe without that, we cannot perfectly poſſeſs either the one or other. It is ſo for the purchaſing, of Exactneſs in our thoughts, and Juſtice in our actions: it is ſo, for the right Knowledge of our Selves, and what is about us, that we may make the right and lawfull uſe thereof; and that we may regulate our paſſions by Moderating of our deſires. To become capable of places and dignities, is one of the uſes of Learning; and to be fit to be a Judge or Biſhop, we ſhould ſtrive to acquire as much as is poſſible, becauſe without it the functions of ſuch Offices cannot be well diſcharged, but not preciſely for that end, and for to become more happy by the poſſeſſion of the honours, and advantages which they afford: That would be to abuſe learning by a ſordid and baſe end.

So

So that there is nothing but weakneſs, or a ſecret and blind intereſt which can make men ſay, that *Women* ought to remain ſhut out from Learning, for this reaſon, that they have never been publickly admitted to any ſhare therein. It fareth not with the goods of the mind, as with the goods of the body; againſt them there is no preſcription: and how long ſoever, we have been deprived thereof, we have alwayes the right of Reverſion. But it being impoſſible that the ſame goods of the body, could at the ſame time, be poſſeſſed by ſeveral perſons, without domination on each ſide; men have had reaſon for the ſafety of families, to maintain the poſſeſſours, with good conſcience, in prejudice of the ancient proprietaries.

But, as concerning the advantages of the mind, it goes quite otherwayes. Every one hath a right to all that is intelligible, and good ſenſe. The Spring of reaſon is not limited; it hath in all men an equal Juriſdiction; we are all born Judges of what touches and affects us; And if we cannot diſpoſe of the ſame with equal power, we may

at

at leaſt, all know them with a like right. And as all men employ the uſe of the light and air, without prejudice to any perſon, by that communication, all may likewiſe poſſeſs the Knowledge of truth without hurting one another. For the more that it is known, the more it appears ſplendid, and lovely: The greater are the number of thoſe that ſearch after it, and the ſooner they find it: And if both Sexes, had equally buſied themſelves therein, it had ſtill the ſooner been diſcovered. In ſo much then, that Truth and Knowledge are goods which admit of no preſcription; And ſuch that have been depriv'd thereof, may make a Re-entry, without doing injury to thoſe who are already Maſters of the ſame; There can be none, but ſuch as would rule mens minds by belief, and credit, that have reaſon to apprehend this Reverſion, for fear, that if Sciences ſhould become ſo common, glory might alſo; and that the Fame to which they aſpire, ſhould be leſſened by partnerſhip.

Women are as Capable of Officers and Employments in civil Society as Men are.

THere is therefore no inconvenience, if Women apply themselves to Study and Learning as well as we. They are able to make a very good use of them, and to draw from thence the two Advantages which we expect therefrom; the one, to have clear and distinct Knowledges, which we naturally desire, and whereof the desire is often stifled, and annihilated by the confusion of thoughts, and the cares, and agitations of life: And the other, To employ these Knowledges, for the particular conduct of themselves, and for that of others in the different conditions of Society, of which they make a part. This agrees not atall with the common Opinion. There are indeed many that will believe, that Women may learn what is to be attained by the Physicks or Natural Sciences; but will not admit, that they are as fit as Men for those which may be called Civil, as Ethicks, Laws, and Politicks; and that

if they ſhould be able by the Maximes of theſe Laſt, to conduct themſelves, they could not therefore be capable of guiding of others.

Men entertain this thought, becauſe, they conſider not, that the mind in all it's actions, hath need of no more but Diſcerning, and Exactitude, and whoſoever hath once theſe two qualities in one thing, may as eaſily, and by the ſame means have them in all the reſt. The being Moral or Civil, changeth not the nature of our actions: They continue to be ſtill Natural: Becauſe that Morality is nothing elſe, but to know the manner, how men regard the actions of others, with Relation to the Notions which they have of good or evil, of vice and vertue, of juſtice and injuſtice; And as that, when we have once rightly conceived the Rules of Motion, in Natural *Philoſophy*, we may apply them to all the changes, and varieties which are remarked in Nature: So likewiſe knowing once the true principles of civil Sciences, there remains no more difficulty to make application thereof to the new, and incident Emergents which occurr.

They

They that are in places have not alwayes more wit, though they have better Luck than others: And indeed it is not neceſſary, that they ſhould have more, than the common; though it be to be wiſhed, that none were admitted to employments but the moſt worthy. We act ſtill after the ſame manner, and by the ſame Rules, in what eſtate ſoever, we find our ſelves; unleſs it be that the more our conditions are raiſed, the more our cares and views are extended, becauſe we have the more to do. And all the change which happens to men who are placed above others, is like to that of a perſon who being mounted to the top of a Tower, carryes his proſpect farther, and diſcovers more different objects, than they who ſtay on the ground below: It is their favors, if *Women* be as capable as we are to guid themſelves, they are likewiſe to conduct others, and to have place in charges and dignities of Civil Society.

The moſt Simple, and natural uſe that we can make of Sciences which we have well learned, is to teach them to others: And if *Women* had ſtudyed

in the Universities with men, or in others appointed for them in particular, they might have entred into Degrees, and taken the title of Master of Arts, Doctor of Divinity, Medicine, Civil, and Cannon Law: And their genius so advantagiously fitting them to learn, would dispose them likewise to teach with success. They would find methods, and insinuating biasses, to instill their Doctrine; they would discover the strength and weakness of their Schollars, to proportion themselves to their reach, and the facility which they have to express themselves; and, which is one of the most excellent talents of a good Master, would compleat and render them admirable Mistresses.

The employment which approacheth most to a School-Master, is that of Pastour or Minister in the Church, and there can be nothing else but customs shewn, which remove *VVomen* there-from. They have a Spirit as well as we, capable of the Knowledge and love of God, and thereby able to incline others to know, and love him. Faith is common to them with us:

And

And the Gospel with the Promises thereof, are likewise addressed to them. Charity also comprehends them in its duties; and, if they know how to put in practice the actions thereof, may not they likewise publickly teach its Maxims? Whosoever can preach by Example, from stronger reason can do so by Words: And a *Woman* that should joyn her Natural Eloquence with the Morality of *Jesus Christ*, should be as capable as another, to Exhort, Direct Correct, admit into Christian Society those who deserved. And cut off such who after having submitted themselves thereto, should refuse to observe the Rules thereof. And if men were accustomed to see *Women* in a Pulpit, they would be no more startled thereat, than the *Woman* are at the sight of men.

We are not assembled into Society, but that we may live in peace, and find, in a Mutual assistance, all that is necessary for the Body, and Soul. This we could not enjoy without trouble, if there were no authority; that is to say, that for that end, there ought to be some persons who have power to make Laws, and to inflict punish-

ment upon the breakers of them. And to make the right uſe of that authority, we muſt know to what it obligeth, and be perſwaded that thoſe who poſſeſs it, ought to have no other deſign in the diſcharge thereof, but to procure the welfare and advantange of their inferiours. *Women* being no leſs ſuſceptible of this perſwaſion than men, may not we then ſubmit our ſelves to them, and conſent not only not to reſiſt their Orders, but even contribute as much as we can to oblige to obedience ſuch as make any difficulty therein?

So that nothing needed to hinder, but that a *Woman* might ſit upon a Throne, and that for the government of her people, She might ſtudy their humour, the intereſts, their Lawes, their cuſtomes, and their practices: That ſhe might place in Offices of the Gown and Sword, only able and deſerving perſons; and, in the Dignities of the Church, men of underſtanding, and Example. Is it a thing ſo difficult, that a *Woman* could not perform it, to inſtruct her-ſelf of the ſtrength, and weakneſs of a State, and of thoſe that lay round it; to entertain amongſt ſtrangers

gers ſecret Intelligences for to diſcover their deſignes, and diſappoint their meaſures, and to have faithfull Spies, and Emiſſaries in all Suſpected places; to be exactly informed of all that paſſeth there, wherein ſhe might have intereſt? Is there needfull for the conduct of a Kingdome more vigilance, and application than *Women* have for their families, or the Religious for their Convents? They would prove no leſs refined in publick Negotiations, than they are in private affairs. And as piety and mildneſs is natural to their Sex, their government would prove leſs Rigorous than that of many Princes, and we ſhould wiſh for under their Reign, that which is often feared under that of many others, that Subjects would regulate themſelves according to the Example of their Governours.

We may eaſily conclude, that if *Woman* are capable to poſſeſſe ſeverally all publick authority, they are ſtill more to be ſubordinate Officers and Miniſters: As Vice-Queens, Governants, Secretaries, Counſellors of State, and Treaſurers.

For my part, I ſhould be no more ſurprized to ſee a *VVoman* with a helmet on her head, than to ſee her with a Crown; preſide in a Council of warr, as well as in a Council of State: To ſee her train, and exerciſe her Souldiers, drawing them up in Battell-array, and divide them in ſeveral Bodyes, and Squadrons, with as much eaſe as ſhe would pleaſe her ſelf to ſee it done. The military Art hath nothing beyond others, whereof *VVomen* are not capable, unleſs it be that it is ſomewhat more rude, cauſeth greater noiſe, and does more miſchief. The Eyes are ſufficient to learn from a Mapp, that is ſomewhat exact, all the High-wayes of a countrey, the good and bade paſſages, and the places that are moſt propper for ſurprizes, and encampings. There is hardly a Souldier that is not ready to know that a General ought firſt to gain all the Paſſes before he venture there his forces, regulate all his enterprizes according to the advice of good Scouts; And even deceive his Army by Wiles, and counter-marches the better to cover his deſign. A *VVoman* can do all this, and can invent

Stra-

Stratagems to ſurpriſe the enemy, put the wind and duſt in his teeth, and the Sun in his face; And Charging him on one ſide, Flank him on the other; Give him falſe allarms, draw him into an ambuſh by a feigned flight; give battel, and be the firſt that mounts a breach to encourage the Souldiers; Perſwaſion, and paſſion does all: And *Women* teſtifie no leſs heat, and reſolution when their honour is concerned, than is requiſite to attack or defend a Place.

What can be reaſonably objected, why a *VVoman* of ſound Judgement and Underſtanding, might not take the chaire in a court of Juſtice, and preſide in all other companies. There are a great many able men who would learn the Lawes and Cuſtomes of a ſtate with leſs trouble, than ſome Games at Cards, which *VVomen* underſtand ſo well: And it is as eaſy to remember them, as an intire Romance; is it not as eaſy to ſee into the heart of an affair, as to trace an intrigue upon the Stage, and make as faithfull report of a Law ſuite, as of a Comedy? All theſe things are alike eaſy, to

those who equally apply themselves thereto.

Now seeing there is neither office, nor imployment in society which is not comprehended in these whereof we have spoken, nor where there is greater need of knowledge or parts: it must be confest, that *Women* are proper for all.

Besides, the Natural dispositions of the body, and the Notions which men have of the function and duties of their places, there is still somewhat necessary that renders them more or less capable to acquit themselves worthy thereof. The true perswasion of what a man is obliged to do, the consideration of Religion, and interest, emulation betwixt equals, desire of winning glory, and Honour, and of making, preserving, or increasing ones fortitude. According as a man is more or less touched with these things, his management is altogether different: And *Women* being no less sensible thereof than men, in regard of employments, they want nothing to render them their equals.

We may (then) with Assurance, exhort Ladies to apply themselves to Study; without having Respect to the little Reasons of those who would undertake to divert them there-from. Since they have a Mind (as well as we) capable of knowing of Truth (which is the only Subject, on which they can employ their Pains worthily), they ought to put themselves in condition of avoyding the Reproach, of having stifled a Talent, which they might put to use; and of having detained Truth in Idleness and Pleasure. There is no other way for them to Guard themselves against Errour, and the Surprize to which they are exposed (who Learn nothing but by the manner of *Gazets*; that is to say, upon the bare word of another), nor to render themselves happy in this Life, by practising Vertue with Discretion.

What Advantage soever they propose to themselves besides this, they would meet with it in Study. If their Parlours were turned into Academies, their Entertainments would be Greater, more Solid, and more Pleasing.

And

And every one may judge, of the Satisfaction she should have to Discourse of Lofty Matters, by the Content that she hath to hear others speak thereof. How slight soever might be the Subjects of their Conversation, they would have the Pleasure to treat them more wittily than the Vulgar: And the delicate Manners, which are so peculiar to their Sex (being fortified by solid Reasons and Arguments) would far more sensibly affect the Hearers.

They who only desire to please, would there (to Admiration) find their Designe; For, the Splendour of the Beauty of Body, being heighthened by that of the Mind, would thereby become a hundred times more Brisk and Lively. And, as *VVomen* (but of ordinary Beauty) are alwayes well regarded when they are Witty, the Advantages of the Mind, Cultivated by Study, would give them Means abundantly to supply what Nature or Fortune might have denyed them. They would be admitted into the Entertainments of the Learned, and reigne amongst them upon a double Respect:

They

They would enter into the Management of Affairs: Their Husbands would not refuſe to abandon to them the Conduct of their Families, and to take their Advice in all things. And, ſeeing that Matters are in ſuch a ſtate, that they cannot (now) be admitted into Charges, (at leaſt) they might be able to know the Nature of Functions, and judge if they be deſervingly beſtowed.

The Difficulty of arriving to this Pitch, ought not to ſcare them: It is not ſo great as *Men* have made it. That which is the cauſe, why *Men* think there is need of ſo much Trouble, for to gain a few Knowledges, is, Becauſe they teach (for that end) a great many things, which are moſt unprofitable for thoſe that aſpire thereto. All Knowledge (even to this preſent) conſiſting only in poſſeſſing of a *Hiſtory* of the Sentiments of thoſe that are gone before us; and *Men*, having too much repoſed on Cuſtom, and the Credit of their Maſters, very few have had the good Luck to find the Natural Method. Herein we might labour, and make appear, That

Men

Men may render themſelves qualified, in far leſs time, and with a great deal more Pleaſure, than is ordinarily imagined.

That Women *have an Advantagious Diſpoſition for Sciences; and that the true Notions of Perfection, Nobility, and Honeſty, ſuit with them as well as* Men.

HItherto, we have conſidered nothing in *Women*, but the Head; and, it hath appeared, that that Part (taken in general) hath in them as much Proportion for all the Sciences (whereof it is the Organ), as in *Men*. Nevertheleſs, becauſe that this Organ is not altogether alike, even amongſt all *Men* themſelves; and that there are a great many, in whom it is more proper for ſome things than for others: we muſt deſcend a little lower into the Particular, to ſee if there be nothing

nothing in *Women*, that renders them leſs fit for Learning, than our ſelves.

We may obſerve, that they have a Countenance more ſtately and happy than we: They have the Fore-Head high, lofty, and large; which is the uſual Mark of Witty and Imaginative Perſons. And, we find in effect, that *Women* have much Vivacity, Fancy, and Memory; which denotes a Brain ſo diſpoſed, that it eaſily receives the Impreſſions of Objects, even of the moſt Slight and Inconſiderable, which eſcape ſuch, as are of another Diſpoſition; and that it retains them without trouble, and preſents them to the Mind in the inſtant that it ſtands in need thereof.

When this Diſpoſition is accompanied with Heat, it renders the Mind more ready and quick to be affected by the Objects; to faſten on, and penetrate, into them the more; and to extend the Images, and Impreſſions thereof, at pleaſure: From whence, it happens, that they who have good Imaginations (conſidering things on more

more ſides, and in leſs time), are very Ingenious, and Inventive; and diſcover more with one only Glance, than many others after much Attention. They are fit to repreſent things, with an inſinuating and pleaſing ſtrain, and to find, on the Spot, Turns and proper Expedients: They expreſs themſelves with Facility and Grace; and ſet off their Thoughts with the greateſt Aadvantage.

All this is Remarkable in *Women*; and, I can ſee nothing in this Diſpoſition, which is inconſiſtent with a good Wit. Judgment, and Exactneſs, make the Natural Character thereof; to acquire which two good Qualities, we muſt become a little Sedentary, and dwell on Objects; to the end, that we may avoid the Errour and Miſtake, wherein *Men* fall by skipping. It is true, that the multitude of Thoughts, in brisk Perſons, hurries (many times) the Imagination; But, it is likewiſe true, That, by Exerciſe, it may be fixed. We have the Experience of this, in the greateſt *Men* of this Age; who, for the moſt part, are all very imaginative.

It

It may be affirmed, That this Temper is the fitteſt for Society; and that *Men*, not being made to remain alwayes alone, and ſhut up in a Cloſet; we ought (in ſome meaſure) the more to eſteem thoſe who have the beſt Diſpoſition, pleaſingly and profitably to Communicate their Thoughts. And *Women*, who have naturally Wit, (becauſe they have Fancy, Memory, and a ſparkling Livelineſs,) may with a little Application, acquire the Qualities of a good Judgment.

This is ſufficient to prove, That, in Reſpect of the Head alone, the *Two Sexes* are Equal. There are Obſervations upon the reſt of the Body, which are moſt Curious; but of which, we muſt only ſpeak in paſſing.

Men have alwayes had this common ill-Luck, to ſpill and ſhead (if we may ſo ſay) their Paſſions on all the Works of Nature: There is not any Notion, which they have not blended with ſome touch of Love or Hatred, of Eſteem or Contempt: And theſe which concern the Diſtinction of the *Two Sexes*, are ſo material, and ſo be-

befogg'd with the Sentiments of Imperfection, Baſeneſs, Undecency, and other Trifles; that, ſeeing they cannot be touched without moving of ſome Paſſion, and ſtirring up the Fleſh againſt the Spirit, it is often Prudence to let them alone.

And yet, it is upon that odd Medley, of alwayes confuſed Notions, that the Opinions diſadvantagious to *Women*, are founded; and which the ſmall Wits (ridiculouſly) uſe to mortifie them. The juſteſt Mean and Temper, that can be betwixt the neceſſity of explaining ones Self, and the Difficulty of doing it Innocently, is, To obſerve what we ought (Rationally) to underſtand by Perfection and Imperfection, by Nobility and Baſeneſs, and by Decency and Undecency.

When I conceive that there is a *God*, I eaſily conceive, that all things depend on Him: And if, after having conſidered the Natural and Intrinſical State of Creatures, which conſiſts (if they be Bodies) in the Diſpoſition of their Parts, with a Reference to one another; and the Extrinſical, which is

is the Relation that they ſtand in, to act or ſuffer with other Beings that environ them: If (I ſay) I enquire into the Reaſon of theſe two Conditions, I can find, none other but the Will and Pleaſure of Him who is the Author of them. I obſerve further, that Bodies have (ordinarily) a certain Diſpoſition, which renders them capable to produce and receive certain Effects; For example, that *Man* can underſtand by the help of his Ears, the Thoughts of others, and by the Inſtruments of Voice, expreſs to them his own. And I Remark, that Bodies are uncapable of ſuch Effects, when they are otherwiſe diſpoſed: From whence, I inform my ſelf of two Notions; whereof the one Repreſents to me, the Firſt State of Things, with all their neceſſary Conſequences; and that I call the State of *Perfection*: And the other, the Condition contrary; which I name *Imperfection*.

So, a *Man* (in my Eſteem) is Perfect, when he hath all that he needeth (according to Divine Inſtitution), for

for the producing and receiving the Effects to which he is appointed: And, he is imperfect, when he hath more or fewer Parts, than are neceſſary; or any Indiſpoſition that removes him from this end.

Wherefore, he being formed in ſuch manner, that he hath need of Aliment for Subſiſtence, I look not upon that Neceſſity, as an Imperfection; no more, than the Need which is coupled with the uſe of Food; that, what is Superfluous, muſt be avoided out of the Body. I find alſo, that all Creatures are equally Perfect, as long as they continue in their natural and ordinary State.

We muſt not confound Perfection with Nobility: Theſe are two things very different. Two Creatures may be Equal in Perfection, and in Nobility Unequal.

When I make Reflexion upon my Self, it ſeems to me, that my Spirit (being only capable of Knowledge) ought to be preferred to my Body, and be conſidered as the moſt Noble: And, when I conſider Bodies, without any

any Reſpect to my Self; that is to ſay, without reflecting, that they may be profitable or hurtful to me, pleaſing or diſpleaſing; I cannot perſwade my ſelf, that one is more Noble than another, being All but made of matter diverſly Figured. Yet, when I medle with Bodies (conſidering the Good or Hurt that they do to me), I come to eſteem them differently. Although that my Head (regarded without Intereſt) affects me no more, than the other Parts; nevertheleſs, I prefer it to all the reſt, when I come to think, that it is of greater importance to me, in the Union of the Spirit with the Body.

For the ſame Reaſon it is, that, although all the Places of the Body be equally perfect, we have (nevertheleſs) different Eſteems for them: The very Parts themſelves (whereof the Uſe is moſt neceſſary) being many times conſidered with ſome ſort of Contempt and Averſion; becauſe that the Uſe is leſs pleaſing, or otherwiſe. It is ſo with all that ſurround and affects us; For, that which makes that

one thing pleaſeth one *Man*, and diſpleaſeth another, is, that it hath made impreſſion upon them differently.

It is the Engagement of *Men* in Society, that produceth in them the Notion of Decency: So that, although it be neither Imperfection nor Baſeneſs, to eaſe and comfort the Body; and that it is even a Neceſſity, and Indiſpenſable Conſequence of its Natural Diſpoſition; and that all the wayes of doing thereof, are Equal; there are ſome notwithſtanding, that are conſidered leſs Decent; becauſe they are more offenſive to the Perſons, in whoſe Preſence they are performed.

As all Creatures, and all their Actions, being conſidered in themſelves, and without any reference to Cuſtom or Eſteem that is made thereof, are as Perfect, and as Noble, the one as the other; they are likewiſe equally Decent, being conſidered in the ſame manner. Wherefore, we may ſay, that the Regards of Decency and Undecency are almoſt all, in their Original,

ginal, nothing elſe but the Effects of Imagination, and the Capriciouſneſs of *Men*. This appears by that, That one thing which is Decent in one Countrey, is not all ſo in another; and that, in the ſame Kingdome, but in divers places, or (in the ſame time) but amongſt Perſons of different Condition, Quality, and Humour; the ſame Action is ſometime conforme, ſometime contrary to Decency. So that, Decency is nothing but the manner of uſing of Natural Things, according to the Eſteem which *Men* paſs upon them; and to which, it is Prudence to Conform.

We are all poſſeſſed with this Notion; although we make no Reflexion thereon, That all Perſons (whether they be our Beloved, or the Witty and Judicious; who in Publick, and according to the ordinary Cuſtom, ſubject themſelves to the Rites of Decency) diſcharge themſelves thereof in Private, as of Burdens troubleſome and fooliſh.

The

The Case is the same with Nobility. In some Countries of the *Indies*, the Labourers have the same Rank, as the Nobles with us: In some Countries, Sword-Men are preferred to the Gown-Men; And in others, the quite contrary is Practised: Every one, according as his Inclinations leads him to favour such States, or that he esteems them most Important.

Comparing these Notions, with the Opinions that the Vulgar have of *VVomen*; we shall (without trouble) discover wherein consisteth the Errour.

That

From whence is derived, the Distinction of Sexes; *How far it extends it self: And that it places no Difference betwixt* Men *and* Women, *with Relation to Vice and Vertue: And that the Temperament, and Constitution in general, in it self, is neither good nor bad.*

GOD willing to produce *Men* in Dependence, one upon another, by the Concourse of two Persons; for that end, framed two Bodies, which were different: Each was perfect in its kind; and they ought both to be disposed, as they are at present: And all that depends on their particular Constitution, ought to be considered, as making a part of their Perfection.

It is then without Reason, that some imagine, That *Women* are not so per-

fect as *Men*; and that they look upon that (in them) as a Defect, which is an Eſſential Portion of their Sex; without the which, it would be uſeleſs for the end, for which it hath been formed; which begins and ceaſes with Fecundity, and which is deſtin'd for the moſt excellent uſe of the World; that is, to frame and nouriſh us in their Bellies.

The *Two Sexes* (together) are neceſſary to beget the like: And if we knew, how it is that ours contribute thereto, we ſhould find enough to be ſaid againſt our ſelves. It is hard to be underſtood, upon what they ground themſelves, who maintain, That *Men* are more Noble than *Women*, in regard of Children; ſince it is properly the *Women* who Conceive us, Form us, and give us Life, Birth, and Breeding. It is true, they pay dearer for it than we: But their Pain and Trouble ought not to be Prejudicial to *them*, and draw upon *them* Contempt, in place of Eſteem, which they thereby deſerve.

Who would ſay, That Fathers and Mothers (who labour to bring up their

their Children, good Princes to Govern their Subjects, and Magistrates to render them Justice,) are less Estimable than they whose Aid and Assistance they use, for to discharge themselves of their Duties?

There are some *Physitians*, who have mightily enlarged themselves upon the Temperament of *Sexes*, to the Disadvantage of *Women*; and have pursued their Discourses out of sight; to shew, That their *Sex* ought to have a Constitution altogether different from ours, which renders it inferiour in all things. But their Reasons are only light Conjectures; which come into the Heads of such, as judge of things only by Prejudice, and upon simple Appearances.

When they perceive the *Two Sexes* more distinguished, by that which regards the civil, than particular, Functions; they fancy to themselves, that so they ought to be; And, not discerning exactly enough, betwixt that which proceeds from Custom and Education, and that which comes from Nature; they have attributed to one and the same Cause,

all which they ſee in Society; imagining, that when *God* Created *Man* and *Woman*, he diſpoſed them in ſuch a manner, as ought to produce all the Diſtinction which we obſerve betwixt them.

This is to carry too far the Difference of *Sexes*: It ought to be bounded by the Deſigne, which *God* hath had to form *Men*, by the Concourſe of two Perſons; and no more to be admitted, but what is neceſſary for that Effect.

We ſee, that *Men* and *Women* are alike (almoſt) in all, as to the inward and outward Conſtitution of the Body; and that the Natural Functions (on which depends our Conſervation) are performed in both, after the ſame manner. It is then enough to the end, that they may give Birth to a Third; that there be ſome Organs in the one, which are not in the other: And yet, it is not neceſſary in reſpect of that, (as *Men* imagine) that *Women* have leſs Strength and Vigour than *Men*. And, as there is nothing but Experience, that can enable us to judge aright of that Diſtinction; do not we find, that *Women*

men are mixed, as we are? There are ſome both Strong and Weak in both *Sexes*. *Men* brought up in Softneſs and Eaſe, are worſe than *Women*; and ſink at firſt under Labour: But when (by Neceſſity, or otherwiſe) they are hardened, they become Equal, and ſometimes Superiour to others.

It is juſt ſo with *Women*: They that are taken up and employed in painful Exerciſes, are ſtronger than *Ladies*, who only handle the Needle. And this may encline us to think, that if both *Sexes* were equally Exerciſed, the one might acquire as much Vigour as the other; which, in former times, have been ſeen in a Common-Wealth; where Wreſtling, and other Exerciſes, were common to *both*: The ſame is Reported of the *Amazones*, in the South Part of *America*.

We ought not (then) to lay any ground on certain ordinary Expreſſions, drawn from the preſent State of the *Two Sexes*. When we would (mockingly) blame a *Man*, as having little Courage, Reſolution, and

Conſtancy, we call him *Effeminate*; as if we would ſay, That he is as Low, and Cow-hearted, as a *Woman*. On the other hand, to praiſe a *Woman* that is above the Ordinary, becauſe of her Courage, Strength, or Wit; we ſay, ſhe is a *Man*. Theſe Expreſſions (ſo advantagious to *Men*) do not a little Contribute, to entertain the high Notion that we have of *them*; Becauſe we conſider not, that they are but Likely-hoods; and that their Verity indifferently ſuppoſes Nature, or Cuſtom; and ſo, are purely Contingent, and Arbitrary. Vertue, Mildneſs, and Integrity, being ſo peculiar to *Women* (if their Sex had not been ſo little eſteemed); when we would have ſignified, with Elogy, that a *Man* had all theſe Qualities in an Eminent Degree; we would have ſaid, He is a *VVoman*, if it had ſo pleaſed *Men*, to Eſtabliſh this form of Speech.

What-ever the Matter be, it is not the Strength of Body, that ought to diſtinguiſh *Man-kind*; otherwiſe, Beaſts would have the advantage of them;

them; and, amongſt our Selves, the Strongeſt. Notwithſtanding, we know by Experience, that ſuch who have ſo great Strength, are proper for nothing but Matterial Works: And that theſe, on the other hand, who have leſs, have commonly more Brains. The ableſt *Philoſophers*, and the greateſt Princes, have been Delicate enough; and the greateſt Generals, would not have (perhaps) been willing to Wreſtle with the meaneſt of their Souldiers. Go but to a Court of Juſtice, and you ſhall ſee, whether the greateſt Judge match alwayes (in Strength) the loweſt of their Officers.

It is then uſeleſs, to lean ſo much upon the Conſtitution of the Body, for to render Reaſon of the Difference which is ſeen betwixt the *Two Sexes*, in Relation to the Spirit.

The Temperament does not conſiſt in an indiviſible Point: For, as we cannot find two Perſons in whom it is altogether alike; neither can we any more determine, preciſely, wherein it is that they differ. There are many ſorts of *Cholericks*, *Sanguines*,

and *Melancholicks*; and all these Diversities hinder not, but that they may be often as capable the one, as the other; and that there may be excellent *Men*, of all sorts of Constitutions: And even supposing, that that of the *Two Sexes* be as different, as it is pretended to be; there is still found greater Difference amongst many *Men*, who are (notwithstanding) believed capable of the same things. The More, and the Less, being so little considerable, there is nothing, but a spirit of Wrangling, that can make it be regarded.

It is propable, that that which engrosseth so much (into Notion) the Distinction whereof we speak, is, That *Men* examine not precisely enough, all that which is Remarkable in *Women*: And that Defect makes us fall into the Errour of those, who (having the Mind confused) distinguish not aright, what (severally) belongs to things; and attribute to one, that which only pertains to another; because they find them together in the same Subject. Wherefore, finding so great Difference in *Women*, as to the man-

manner of Actions, and Functions; *Men* have transferred it to the Temperament, for want of Knowledge of the true Cauſe.

However it be, if we would examine, which is the moſt Excellent of the *Two Sexes*, by the comparing of Bodies; *Women* might pretend to the Advantage, and without inſiſting on the Internal Fabrick of their Bodies; and that it is in them, that the thing in the World (the moſt Curious to be known) paſſeth; to wit, How that *Man* (the moſt Beautiful and Wonderful of all Creatures) is produced: Who can hinder them to ſay, That that which appeareth in the out-ſide, ought to give them the better? That Comelineſs, and Beauty, are natural and peculiar to them; and that it is this, that produceth Effects as ſenſible, as ordinary: And that, if what they can peforme by the inſide of the Head, renders them (at leaſt) *Mens* Equals; the Out-ſide ſeldome ever failes, to render them abſolutely their Miſtreſſes.

Beauty being as real an Advantage, as Strength and Health, Reaſon for-

deth not to plead Pre-eminence therefrom, rather than from the others: and if we ſhould judge of its Value (by the Sentiments and Paſſions, which it excites), as we judge (for the moſt part) of all things; we would find; that there is nothing more eſtimable, there being nothing ſo effective; that is to ſay, which moves and ſtirs more Paſſions, and does mingle and fortifie them more diverſly, as the Impreſſions of Beauty.

It would not at all be neceſſary, to ſpeak any more concerning the Temperament of *VVomen*; if an Author (no leſs Famous than Polite) had not thought fit to conſider it, as the force of the Defects which *Men* commonly charge them with; which helps much to confirm People in the Opinion, That they are leſs to be valued than we. Without relating his Opinion, I ſay, that for the right examining of the Temperament of the *Two Sexes* (with a Reference to Vice and Vertue), it muſt be conſidered in a State indifferent; when, as yet, neither Vice nor Vertue were in Nature: And then we ſhall find, that that which in

one

one time is called Vertue, may in another, pass for Vice (according to the use that *Men* make thereof); So that, in that case, all Temperaments are alike.

For the better Understanding of this Opinion, we must observe, that there is nothing but our Soul capable of Vertue; which, in general, consists in a firm and constant Resolution, of doing that which we judge, the best; according to the divers Occurrencies that we meet with. The Body (properly) is nothing but the Organ, and Instrument of that Resolution (as a Sword in ones hand), both for Offence and Defence: And all the different Dispositions (which renders it more or less fit for that use), ought not to be called good or bad; but as their Effects are more ordinary, and important, for Good and Evil: For example, The Disposition to Flight, for avoyding the Evils which threaten us, is Indifferent; because there are some, which cannot otherwise be shunned; and then, it is Wisdom to flye: When, on the other hand, it is culpable Cowardise, for one to betake himself to his Heels, when the Danger is

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ſuperable, by a generous Reſiſtance; which produceth more Good than Hurt.

But the Mind is no leſs capable in *Women*, than in *Men*, of that firm Reſolution, which makes up Vertue; nor of knowing the Rancounters, when it is to be put in Practice. They can Regulate their Paſſions, as well as we; and are not more enclined to Vice, than to Vertue. We might even make the Ballance turn to their Favour on this ſide; ſince that the Affection towards Children (without compariſon, ſtronger in *Women*, than in *Men*), is naturally linked to Compaſſion; which we may call, the Vertue and Bond of Civil Society: It being impoſſible to conceive, That Society is rationally Eſtabliſhed for other end, than to ſupply the common Wants and Neceſſities of one another. And if we nearly obſerve, How Paſſions are formed in us; we ſhall find, that after the manner that *Women* contribute to the Production and Education of *Men*, it is as a Natural Conſequence, that they ſhould treat them in their Afflictions, in ſome ſort as their Children.

The Difference which is observed, between Men *and* Women, *in regard of Manners, proceeds from the Education which is given Them.*

IT is so much the more important to Remark, That the Dispositions, which we bring with us into the World, are neither (in their Nature) good or bad; that otherwise, we cannot avoyd an Errour very ordinary; whereby *Men* often refer to Nature, that which (onely) springs from Custom.

Men torture their Minds, to search for a Reason, Why we are subject to certain Faults, and have particular Customs; for want of having observed, that which may be produced in us, by Habit, Exercise, *Education*, and outward Condition; that is to say, The Relation of Sex, Age, Fortune, and Employment, wherein we are placed in Society: It being certain, that

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all these different Views diversifying, in an infinite number of wayes, the thoughts, and passions, answerably dispose the minds quite other-wayes, to look on the truths presented to them. It is for that Reason, that the same Maxime, proposed at the same time to Citizens, Souldiers, to Judges, and Princes, affects them, and makes them Act so differently: Because, that *Men* caring for nothing but the out-side; Look on it as the Rule, and measure of their Sentiments: Whence happens, that the one lets pass as useless, that which very much takes up others; That Sword-men are Choaked with that which flatters Gown-men: And that Persons of the same Constitution take sometimes certain things in a contrary Sense; Which enter by one and the same bias into the minds of Persons of different temperament; but who have same the fortune, or education.

It is not that we pretend, that all men bring into the World the same bodily constitution. That would be indeed, an ill-grounded pretence: There

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are ſome that are quick, and ſome ſlow: but it appeareth not, that that diverſity any way hinders the minds to receive the ſame inſtruction: all that, it does, is, that ſome receive it more readily and happily than others. So that what temperament ſoever *Woman* have, they are no leſs capable than we, of truth and ſtudies. And if we find at preſent, in ſome of them ſome defect, or impediment; or even that all of them, do not look into ſolid matters, as men do; to which notwithſtanding experience is contrary, that ought ſolely to be rejected upon the outward condition of their Sex, and on the education, which is given them, which comprehends the ignorance wherein they are left, the Prejudices or Errours, which are inſtilled in them, the Example which they have of others their like. And all the wayes to which *Decorum*, reſtraint, reſerve, ſubjection, and fears, reduceth them.

In effect, nothing is omitted, on their account which may ſerve to perſwade them, that this great difference, which they ſee betwixt their Sex, and ours, is a work of Reaſon, or divine inſtitution.

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The apparel, education, and exercises, cannot be more different. A Maid is not in security but under the wings of her Mother; or under the eyes of a Governant that never leaves her: They Frighten her with every thing: Threaten her with Spirits, and Hobgoblines, in all the corners of the house, where she may be alone: Even in the streets, and Churches, there is something to be feared, if she have not her guards. The great care which is taken to dress her, takes up all her mind: So many lookes as are glanced at her, and so many discourses, which she heares of beauty, imployes all her thoughts; And the complements, which she receives on this Subject, makes her therein place all her happiness. As they never speak to her of any thing else, with that she limits all her designs, and carryes no higher her prospects. Dancing, writing, and reading, are the greatest exercises of *Women*; all their library consists in a few little Bookes of Devotion, with that which is in the little cabinet.

All their Science is reduced to work with a Needle. The Looking Glass

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is the great Master and Oracle which they consult. Balls, Playes, and the Modes, make the subject of their Entertainments: They consider their meetings as, famous Accademies, whether they go to inform themselves of all the news of their Sex. And if it happen, that some one or other distinguish themselves from the common, by the reading of certain Bookes, which they had trouble enough to catch, thereby to unlock their minds, they are often obliged to hide themselves: The greatest part of their companions, out of Jealousie or other respects, never failing to accuse them of intending to play the rare things.

As to Maids of meaner condition, forced to gain their lively-hood by their labour; their parts are still more useless. Care is taken to make them learn a trade convenient to their Sex, as soon as they are fit thereto, and their necessity of imploying themselves continually therein, hinders them from thinking of any thing else: And when both one, and others of them, bred in this manner have attained to the age of marriage, they are engaged therein,

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or otherwayes confin'd to a Cloyſter, where they go on to live as they have begun.

In all that which is taught to *Women*, do we ſee any thing that tends to ſolid inſtruction? It ſeems on the contrary, that men have agreed on this ſort of education, of purpoſe to abaſe their courage, darken their mind, and to fill it only with vanity, and fopperies; there to ſtifle all the ſeeds of Vertue, and Knowledge, to render uſeleſs all the diſpoſitions which they might have to great things, and to take from them the deſire of perfecting themſelves, as well as we by depriving them of the means.

When I ſeriouſly think on the manner, how men look upon that which they think to ſee faulty, in *Women*, I find that ſuch a carriage hath in it ſomewhat beneath perſons endowed with reaſon. If there be equal occaſion of finding of fault in both Sexes, that which accuſeth the other, offends againſt Natural equity; if there be more evill in ours, and that we ſee it not, we are raſh to ſpeak of the faults of others; if we ſee it, and conceal it,

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we are unjuſt to blame the other who hath leſs. If there be more good in *Women*, than in *Men*; *Men* ought to be accuſed of ignorance, or envy, not to acknowledge it, when in a *Woman* there is more Vertue than Vice, the one ſhould ſerve to excuſe the other; and when the defects that ſhe hath are inſurpaſſable, or that the means to rid her ſelf thereof, or guard therefrom, are wanting, as to *Woman* they are, ſuch a one deſerves compaſſion, not contempt. In fine, if theſe defects be but ſlight, or onely apparent, it is imprudence or Malice to inſiſt on them; And it is not hard to prove, that men commonly carry ſo in reſpect of *VVomen*.

It is commonly ſaid, that they are timerous, and uncapable of defence; that they are afraid of their ſhadow, that the cry a child allarmes them, and the whiſtling of the Wind makes them tremble. That is not Univerſal. There are a great many *VVomen* as bold as men, and it is known that the moſt fearfull make often of neceſſity a Vertue; timerouſneſs, is almoſt inſeparable from vertue, and all vertuous perſons have

have it: As they would not do hurt to any, and that they are not ignorant how much wickedneſs is amongſt men; a ſmall matter is enough to fill them with fear. It is a Natural paſſion, from which no body is exempt: all men fear death, and the troubles of life; the moſt powerfull Princes apprehend the Rebellion of their Subjects, and the invaſion of enemies, and the moſt valiant Generals to be ſurprized unawares.

Fear is great, proportionably, to the force which men think they have to reſiſt; and it is not blameable, but in ſuch in who are ſtrong enough to repell the evil which threatens them: And we ſhould be as unreaſonable to accuſe a Judge, or a man that had never minded any thing but his Book, of baſeneſs, for refuſing to fight a duel; as to blame a Souldier who had alwayes carryed arms, for not daring to enter into diſpute againſt a learned *Philoſopher*.

Women are bred in a manner that gives them ground to apprehend, and fear every thing; they have not light enough to avoid ſurprizes in matters of Underſtanding.

Understanding. They have no share in the exercises which give strength and dexterity for attacking, and defending; They see themselves exposed helplessly to suffer the outragiousness of a Sex; so subject to Transports, which regards them with contempt, and that often treats its like with more rage, and cruelty, than Wolves do one another.

Wherefore timerousness in *VVomen* ought not to pass for a defect, but rather for a Rational passion, to which they owe modesty, which is so peculiar to them; and the two great advantages of life, which are the inclination to Vertue; and the aversion from Vice, which the greatest part of men with all the education and light which are given them, can hardly acquire.

Fear of want is the ordinary cause of Avarice, *Men* are no less subject thereunto than *VVomen*; And if we came to an account, I know not if the number of the first should not be found greater, and their covetousness more blame worthy; Since the midle Vertue is not far distant from the two Vices, the Extreams, men often mistake

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the one for the other, and confound avarice with laudable frugality.

As the ſame action may be good in one, and bad another, it often happens that that which is evill in us, is not at all ſo in *Women:* They are deſtitute of all means to make their fortune by their parts, the door of Sciences, and Employments, being ſhut againſt them; And ſo being in worſe condition to guard themſelves againſt the misfortunes, and inconveniences of life, they ought more to be concerned. It is no wonder then, that herewith they ſeeing what a great trouble it is to purchaſe a ſmall eſtate, they take care to keep it.

If they receive ſo eaſily that which is told them, it is an effect of their candour, and ingenuity, that will not ſuffer them to think, that theſe who have authority over them, are ignorant, or intereſted; and we offend Juſtice, to accuſe them of credulity, ſince there is yet more amongſt us. The ableſt men ſuffer themſelves to be too much allured by a falſe appearance; And all their Knowledge is often times, but a

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mean credulity, but of somewhat greater extent than that of *Women*: I mean, that they are not more knowing than others; but because they have more Lightly given their consent, to a greater number of things, of which they have retained the Notions, right or wrong, by having so often run them over.

That which causeth timerousness in *Women*, produceth likewise superstition, which the learned themselves impute to them: But in this, the learned appear like those, who being most in the wrong, perswade themselves that they are in the right, because they make a Lowder Noise than others. They fancy that they themselves, are clear from superstition, because they find it in some ignorant *Women*, whil'st in the mean time, themselves are therein miserably plunged up to the eares.

Though all men were the true worshipers of God, in Spirit, and in Truth, and that *Women* rendered him only Superstitious adoration, in this they would be excusable. They are not at all taught to know God by themselves: they know nothing of him, but what

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is told them: And, as the moſt part of *Men* ſpeak of him in a manner, ſo unworthy of what he is, and diſtinguiſh him not from his Creatures, but only by the attribute of Creator; it is no wonder, that *Women* only knowing him upon their report, Worſhip him by Religion, with the ſame Sentiments that they have for men, whom they fear and reverence.

There are ſome men, that think they can ſufficiently Mortifie the *Women*, by telling of them, that they are nothing elſe all of them but tatlers. They have reaſon to be vexed, at ſo impertinent a calumny. Their body is ſo happily diſpoſed by the temperament which is propper to them, that they diſtinctly retain the impreſſions of Objects, which once they have received: They repreſent them to themſelves without Trouble, and expreſs them with wonderful Facility: That is the Reaſon, that the Notions which they have, awakening on the leaſt occaſion, they begin and continue their Converſation at their Pleaſure: And the Quickneſs of their Spirit (giving them Means to perceive, eaſily, the Relation

on of things among themſelves, they) paſs without trouble from one Subject to another; and, by that means, can ſpeak a long time, without letting the Diſcourſe flag or dye.

The Benefit of Speech, is naturally accompanied with a great deſire of uſing of it, when occaſion offers: It is the only Bond of *Men* in Society; and many find, that there is no greater Pleaſure in the World, nor more becoming the Mind, than to Communicate their Thoughts to others. Wherefore, *Women* being able to ſpeak with Eaſe, and being bred and brought up with others; they were to be blamed, if they failed to entertain themſelves.

They ought not, then, to paſs for Tatlers, but when they ſpeak out of purpoſe; and of things, which they underſtand not, without deſire of Inſtruction.

We muſt not imagine, that People never tatle, but when they talk of Cloths and Faſhions. The Tatle of News-Mongers, is often more ridiculous: And that, ſtore of Words, heaped one upon another (and which

ſignifie nothing at all, in the moſt part of Works), make a Chat far more ſimple, than that of the ſillieſt of *Women*. At leaſt, we may ſay, That the Diſcourſes of theſe, are real and intelligible; and that, they are not vain enough, to imagine (as the greateſt part of the Learned do), That they are Wiſer than their Neighbours; becauſe they utter more Words, and leſs Senſe. If *Men* had a Tongue as free, it would be impoſſible to make them hold their Peace. Every one entertains himſelf with what he knows; Merchants about their Buſineſs, *Philoſophers* with their Studies, and *Women* about that which they have been able to Learn; And they may ſay, That they would have entertained themſelves better, and with greater Solidity, if there had been as great Care for Inſtruction taken with *them*.

It choaks a great many, that *Women*, in their Converſation, teſtifie a great deſire to know every thing. I know not what can be the Palat of theſe *Men*, that cannot reliſh, that *Women* ſhould be ſo Curious: For my part, I am well pleaſed, that People

ple ſhould be curious; and I only adviſe them, to manage it ſo, that they be not troubleſome there-with.

I look upon the Converſations of *VVomen*, as upon thoſe of *Philoſophers*; where it is equally permitted to all, to entertain themſelves about things, of which they have no Knowledge; and there are croſs Times in the one, as well as the other.

It is ordinary with many *Men*, to treat the Curious, like Beggars. When they are in an Humour of beſtowing, they take it not ill to be asked; and when they have a mind to diſcover what they know, they are glad to be entreated; If not, they fail not to ſay, Ye are a little too Curious. Becauſe *Men* have forged to themſelves, that Women ought not to Study; they ſtand upon their Points, when Women demand to be informed of that which is Learned by Books. I eſteem them Curious things; and regret, they have not the means to ſatisfie themſelves therein; being often (only) hindered by a juſt Fear, to addreſs themſelves for that end, to touchy and fooliſh Heads; by whom they would

find themſelves jeer'd, inſtead of receiving Inſtruction. It ſeems to me, that Curioſity is one of the moſt certain Signes of a good Wit; that is, more capable of Learning. It is a Knowledge begun,- which ſets us forward, and makes us proceed farther in the way of Truth. When two Perſons are touched by the ſame thing, and that the one looks upon it with Indifferency, and the other draws nearer, with deſigne to ſee it better; it is a mark, that this hath the Eyes more open. The Mind in both Sexes, is Equally fit for Sciences; and the Deſire, which it may have of them, is no more to be blamed in the one, than in the other. When the Mind finds it ſelf affected with a thing, which it ſees but obſcurely, it ſeems to be by a Natural Right, that it would be cleared therein: Ignorance being the moſt irkſome Slavery (wherein it can be), it is as unreaſonable to condemn a Perſon, who ſtrives to get out of it; as a Wretch, who ſhould endeavour to eſcape out of a Priſon, where he were ſhut up.

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Amongſt all the Faults that Women are charged with, the Inconſtant and Fickle Humour, is that which makes the manieſt diſcontented. In the mean-time, they themſelves are not leſs ſubject thereto; But becauſe, they ſee themſelves Maſters, they think that every thing is lawful to them: And that Women, being once engaged to them, the knot ought to be indiſſoluble (onely) on their part; although that they be both Equal, and that every one is obliged for their own ſhare.

They would not ſo often (Mutually) accuſe one another of Levity, if they obſerved, that it is Natural to *Men*; and that, he that ſayes Mortal, ſayes Inconſtant; and that, it is an Indiſpenſible neceſſity of being, in the manner which we are made. We judge not of Objects, we love, or hate them not; but upon Appearances, which depend not on us. The ſame things appear to us diverſly; ſometime, becauſe they have ſuffered ſome Alteration; ſome time, becauſe we our ſelves are changed. The ſame Meat, more or leſs Seaſoned, (Hot

or Cold) cauſeth in us quite different Senſations: And, remaining ſtill the ſame, we are otherwiſe affected therewith in Sickneſs, than in Health. In our Infancy, we are indifferent, as to Things; which, ten Years after, we look upon with Paſſion, becauſe the Body is Changed.

If a *VVoman* loves us, it is, Becauſe ſhe thinks us Lovely; and, if another hate us, it is, Becauſe we appear to her Hateful. In one time we eſteem thoſe, whom we have ſlighted before; becauſe they have not alwayes appeared to us the ſame; whether it be They, or We, who are Changed. And ſuch an Object, being preſented to the Heart, hath found the Door open; which, a Quarter of an Hour ſooner or later, had been barr'd againſt it.

The Hovering, wherein we many times find our Selves betwixt two different Inclinations, which one and the ſame Object cauſeth in us, convinceth us in ſpight of our Teeth, that the Paſſions are not free; and that we are unjuſt to complain, That we are otherwiſe conſidered of, than we would. As a ſmall Matter is enough to kindle Love;

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ſo, a little thing can extinguiſh it: and that Paſſion depends no more upon us in its Progreſs, than in its Birth. Of ten Women, that aſpire to be Loved, it falls out ordinarily, That ſhe who hath leaſt Merit, leaſt of Birth and Beauty, ſhall carry it over the reſt; becauſe that ſhe may have had a Briſker Air, or ſome-what more in Mode, or ſuitable to our Guſto, in the Humour that then we find our ſelves in.

It is ſo far from doing wrong to Women, to accuſe them of being more Cunning and Artificious than Men, that Men ſpeak for them, if they know what they ſay; ſince, by ſo ſaying, they acknowledge them to be more Witty and Prudent. Artifice is a ſecret way of attaining an End propoſed, without being diverted: There is need of Wit, to find out that way; and Dexterity, to manage it: And we cannot find fault, that a Woman imployes Artifice, to avoyd being deceived. Craft is far more Pernicious, and more ordinary amongſt Men: That hath alwayes been the common Road, to enter into the Places and Employments, where they may do greateſt Miſchief.

And, instead of that, That *Men* (who have a mind to Cheat), employ their Goods, their Understanding, and their Power, from which we are rarely secure: *Women* have nothing to use, but Caresses and Eloquence, which are natural Means; against which, we may more easily guard our Selves, when there is any reason of Mistrust.

For the Summary of Accusation and Defect, it is said, That *Women* are more malitious and wicked than *Men*: And all the Evil, with which *Men* can charge *them*, is shut up in this Opinion. I do not believe, that those who entertain this Thought, do pretend, That there are more *Women* than *Men*, who do Mischief: That would be a manifest Falshood; For, they have no part in Employments, and Charges; the abuse of which, is the cause of all publick Calamities; and their Vertue is too Exemplary; and the Disorders of *Men* too well known to call them in question.

When *Men* (then) say, That *Women* have more Malice; it signifies no more, but that, when they set themselves

ſelves to do Evil, they do it more dextrouſly, and drive it farther than *Men*. Let it be ſo. This marks in them a moſt ſolid Advantage: For, one cannot be capable of doing much Miſchief, without having good Judgment; and without being alſo (by Conſequence) capable of doing much Good. So that, *VVomen* ought not to look upon this Reproach, more Injurious, than that which might be made to Rich and Powerful *Men*; that they are more wicked than the Poor, becauſe they have more Opportunies of hurting: And *VVomen* might anſwer, as they; That, if they can do Hurt, they can alſo do Good; and that, if the Ignorance wherein they are left be the cauſe, Why they are worſe than we; Knowledge, on the contrary, would render them much better.

This ſhort Diſcuſſion, of the moſt ſignal Defects (which *Men* conceive peculiar, and natural, to the lovely *Sex*) proves two things; the one, That they are not ſo conſiderable, as the Vulgar Imagine; and the other That they may be Rejected, upon the little

Education which *VVomen* have; and what-ever they are, they may be amended by Inſtruction; of which, *VVomen* are no leſs capable than our Selves.

If the *Philoſophers* had followed this Rule, in judging of all that concerns *VVomen*, they would have ſpoken more ſoundly; and had not (in Reſpect of them) fallen into Ridiculous Abſurdities. But the moſt part, both of Antient and Modern, having only built their *Philoſophy* upon popular Prejudices; and, having been in great Ignorance of themſelves, it is no wonder, that they have ſo far miſtaken others. Without giving our ſelves any trouble to medle with the Antients; we may ſay of the Modern, That the manner how they are Taught (making them believe, though falſly, That they cannot become more knowing, than thoſe that have gone before them), renders them Slaves to Antiquity, and enclines them, to embrace (blindly) all that they find therein, as Conſtant and Univerſal Truths. And becauſe, that all that they ſay againſt *VVomen*, is principally founded upon what they

they have Read in the Antients; it will not here be unprofitable, to relate ſome of the moſt curious Conceits on this Subject; which have been left to us, by theſe Illuſtrious Dead, whoſe very Aſhes, and Rottenneſs, are at this Day, held in ſo great Veneration.

Plato (the Father of Antient *Philoſophy*) thanked the Gods for three Favours, which they had beſtowed on him; but chiefly, for that he was Born a *Man*, and not a *VVoman*. If he had in his Eye their preſent Condition, I ſhould eaſily be of his Mind: But that which makes me think, that he had ſome-what elſe in his Thoughts, is, The Doubt which he is ſaid to have been often in, If *Women* ought to be placed in the Category of Beaſts. That may be ſufficient to Rational Men, to make him Condemn himſelf of Ignorance, or Brutiſhneſs; and totally to degrade him from the Title of *Divine*, which he enjoyes no more, but among Pedants.

His Scholar *Ariſtotle* (to whom the Schools ſtill continue the Name of the Glorious Genious of Nature; upon a Miſtake

Miſtake, that he hath known her, better than any other *Philoſopher*) pretends, that *VVomen* are but Monſters. Who would not believe it, upon the Authority of ſo Renowned a Perſonage? To ſay, It is an Impertinence; would be, to choak his Suppoſition too openly.

If a *VVoman* (how Learned ſoever ſhe might be), had wrote as much of *Men*, ſhe would have loſt all her Credit; and *Men* would have imagined it ſufficient, to have refuted ſuch a Foppery; by anſwering, That it muſt be a *VVoman*, or a Fool, that had ſaid ſo. In the mean-while, ſhe would have had no leſs Reaſon, than this *Philoſopher*. *VVomen* are as Antient as *Men*; We ſee them in as great Number; and no *Man* is ſurprized to meet *them* in his Way. To be a Monſter (according to the Opinion, it ſelf, of that Man); there muſt be ſomething Extraordinary, and Surprizing. *VVomen* have nothing of all that: They have been alwayes made after the ſame Faſhion; alwayes Pretty and Witty. And, if they be not made like *Ariſtotle*, they may ſay, That *Ariſtotle* was not made like *them*.

The

The Disciples of this Author (who lived in the time of *Philo*), fell into a Conceit, no less old Fashioned, in regard of *VVomen*; fancying to themselves (according to the Relation of that *Historian*), That they were Half-Men, or Imperfect Males. It is, without doubt, because they have not the Chin hung with a long beard; unless it be that, I can apprehend nothing. The *Two Sexes* (to be Perfect) ought to be, as we see *them*. If the one were altogether like the other, it would be neither of the *Two*. If *Men* be the Fathers of *Women*, *Women* are the Mothers of *Men*; which, at least, renders them Equal: And we might have as much Reason, as these *Philosophers*, to say, That *Men* are Imperfect *VVomen*.

Socrates (who was the Morality and Oracle of Antiquity) speaking of the Beauty of that *Sex*; was accustomed to compare it to a Temple of a Fair Show, but built upon a Jakes.

If this Conceit do not turn our Stomacks, we must only Laugh at it. It is propable, that he judged of the Bodies

Bodies of others, by his own, or by his Wives; who was a She-Devil, which made him deteſt her; and, that he ſpake of her *Sex*, to bring her down: And, that he himſelf was mad to the very ſoul, becauſe he was ugly as a Maggot.

Diogenes, Sir-named *The Dog*, becauſe he was good at nothing but Biteing; ſeeing one day (in paſſing) two *Women*, who Diſcourſed together; told the Company, That there was two Serpents, an Aſpe and a Viper, who Communicated to one another their Poiſon. That Saying is worthy of an Honeſt Man; and I wonder not, that it is Ranked among the goodly Philoſophical Sentences. If the Wiſe *Men* of *Gottam* had lived in his time, it is certain, we ſhould have found their Ran-counters more ſprightly. The good *Man* was a little wounded; and they that knew him a little, judged, that (at that time) he had nothing elſe to ſay.

For the admirable and pleaſant *Democritus*; as he loved to be merry and laugh a little, we muſt not take every

every thing litterally which came from his Mouth. He was a very tall *Man*; and his Wife, one of the leaſt: Being one day asked, Why he had ſo ill matched himſelf? He anſwered (according to his ordinary Rallery), That when we are obliged to chooſe, and when there is nothing that is good to be taken, the Leaſt is alwayes the Beſt. If the ſame Queſtion had been put to his Wife, ſhe might have repartied with as much Reaſon; That a little and a big Husband, being both alike, the one as bad as the other, ſhe had taken her's hap Hazzard; for fear, that if ſhe had choſen, ſhe might have done worſe.

Cato (the Sage and Severe Critick) prayed often, That the Gods would pardon him, if he had been ſo Imprudent, as to truſt the leaſt Secret to a *VVoman*. There ſtuck in the good *Mans* Mind, a Famous Paſſage in the *Roman* Hiſtory; which Antiquaries uſe as a great Argument, to prove the little Secreſie of *VVomen:* A Child of twelve Years of Age, being preſſed by his Mother, to tell her the Reſolution of the

he Senate (where he had been Aſſiſtant), invented to baffle her; that it had been decreed, That every Huſband ſhould have ſeveral Wives. Immediately, ſhe went and told her Neighbours, to conſult about her Meaſures with them; So that, in the ſpace of half an Hour, it was all the Town over. I would gladly know, what a poor Husband would do, if in a State, where *VVomen* were the Miſtreſſes (as in that of the *Amazones*); one ſhould come and tell him, that it had been reſolved in Counſel, That every Husband muſt have an Helper: without doubt, he would not open his Mouth.

Theſe are ſome of the great and ſublime Conceits, which they (whom the Learned ſtudy as Oracles) have entertained, concerning the Beautiful *SEX*: And that which is pleaſant, and odd, both together, is, That Grave *Men* ſeriouſly make uſe of that, which theſe Famous Antients have often but ſaid in Drollery: So true it is, that Prejudices,

judices, and Pre-Occupation, do make *Men* themſelves miſtake the Mark, who paſs for the moſt Rational, Judicious, and Wiſe.

FINIS.

An

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THE *strongest Objections that can be made against us, are drawn from the Authority of great* Men, *and Holy* Scripture: *As to the former, We think to have sufficiently satisfied Them; by telling them, That we acknowledge no other Authority here, but that of Reason, and good Sense.*

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